BHAGAVAD-GITA in ENGLISH (Source)

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BHAGAVAD-GITA in ENGLISH

Author: Sage Veda Vyasa

Translated in English: Ramananda Prasad, Ph.D.
Language Editors: Needed
Contact: rprasad@gita-society.com

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"Let noble thoughts come to us from everywhere"
(The Vedas)

INTRODUCTION

The Bhagavad-Gita is a doctrine of universal truth and a book of moral and spiritual growth. Its message is sublime and non-sectarian. It deals with the most sacred metaphysical science. It imparts the knowledge of the Self and answers two universal questions: Who am I, and how can I lead a happy and peaceful life in this word full of dualities and dilemmas?

It's a timeless book of wisdom that inspired Thoreau, Emerson, Einstein, Oppenheimer, Gandhi and many others. The Bhagavad-Gita teaches us how to equip ourselves for the battle of life. A repeated study with faith purifies our psyche and guides us to face the challenges of modern living leading to inner peace and happiness.

Gita teaches the spiritual science of Self-realization (SR) based on the essence of Upanishads and Vedanta. The prime message of the Gita is: The ultimate purpose of life is to realize one's essential nature and become one with the Supreme Self within all of us. It assures spiritual progress for all humans, and how to be one with the Supreme. Its teachings are profound, universal, uplifting, and sublime.

The ignorance of metaphysical or Spiritual knowledge—not knowing our real identity—is humanity's greatest predicament. It is said that there is no human mind that cannot be purified by a repeated study of the Gita. Gita explains the basic principles of spiritual science— using Sanskrit poetry— in a very clear and inspiring manner. Sacred relationship between the Creator and the creation is well established in the Gita. If one lives in the spirit of even a few verses of the Gita, one's life will be transformed into divinity.

The philosophy of duty, devotion and Self-knowledge is wonderfully synthesized and harmonized in the Gita—without creating any conflict among them—to give the reader eternal bliss, everlasting peace and perennial joy in life. It awakens Cosmic Consciousness and stimulates life with spirituality. Religion tends to create a wall of division and conflicts along religious lines. Whereas, spirituality unites people by breaking those walls. A spiritual person is a

friend of all and a foe of none, because he considers all creatures—living or non-living—as part and parcel of the Cosmic body of the Absolute, the Source.

The message of the Gita came to humanity due to Arjuna's unwillingness to do his duty as a warrior, because fighting involved destruction and killing. Nonviolence or Ahinsa is one of the most fundamental tenets of spiritual culture. All lives, human or non-human, are sacred. This immortal discourse between the Supreme Lord, Krishna, and His devotee-friend, Arjuna, occurs not in a temple, a secluded forest, or on a mountain top; but on a battlefield on the eve of a big war. Anyone can be helped by practice of only a few of its teachings. No change of one's faith or life-style is needed!

A total of seven hundred (700) verses of the Gita, in 18 chapters, are recorded in world's longest epic, Mahabharata, having over 100,000 verses in Sanskrit poetry. In Gita Lord Krishna advises Arjuna to get up and fight. This may create a misunderstanding of the principles of non-violence if the background of the war of Mahabharata is not kept in mind. Therefore, a brief historical description is in order.

In ancient times there was a king who had two sons, Dhritarashtra and Pandu. The former was born blind; therefore, Pandu inherited the kingdom. Pandu had five sons. They were called the Pandavas. Dhritarashtra had one hundred sons. They were called the Kauravas. Duryodhana was the eldest of the Kauravas.

After the death of king Pandu, the eldest son of Pandu became the lawful King. Duryodhana was a very jealous person. He also wanted the kingdom. The kingdom was divided into two halves between the Pandavas and the Kauravas. Duryodhana was not satisfied with his share of the kingdom. He wanted the entire kingdom for himself. He unsuccessfully planned several foul plays to kill the Pandavas and take away their kingdom also. He unlawfully took possession of the entire kingdom of the Pandavas and refused to give back even an acre of land without a war. All mediation by Lord Krishna and others failed. The big war of Mahabharata was thus inevitable. The Pandavas were unwilling participants. They had only two choices: Fight for their right as a matter of duty or run away from war and accept defeat for the sake of peace and nonviolence. Arjuna, one of the five Pandava brothers, faced this dilemma in the battlefield: Whether to fight or run away from war for peace.

Arjuna's dilemma is, in reality, the Universal Dilemma. All human beings face dilemmas, big or small, in their everyday life while performing their duties. Arjuna's dilemma was a big one. He had to make a choice between fighting the war and killing his most revered guru who was on the other side, very dear friends, close relatives, and many innocent warriors; or running away from the

battlefield for the sake of preserving peace and nonviolence. The entire seven hundred verses of the Bhagavad-Gita are a discourse between Lord Krishna and the confused Arjuna on the battlefield near New Delhi, India, in 3,139 BCE. This discourse was narrated to the blind king, Dhritarashtra, by his charioteer, Sanjaya, as an eyewitness war report.

The word 'Bhagavad' means the Supreme Being, God or Bhagavan in Sanskrit. 'Gita' means song. Thus, Bhagavad-Gita means the Song of God or The Celestial Song, because it was sung by Bhagavan Lord Krishna, an incarnation of God Himself.

CHAPTER 1

1. Arjuna's Dilemma

The blind King inquired from his charioteer: O Sanjaya, tell me in detail, what did my sons and the Pandavas do in the battlefield before the war started? (1.01)

Chapter Summary

Sanjaya said: Arjuna asked his charioteer-friend, Lord Krishna, to drive his chariot between the two armies so that he could see the armies on both sides. Arjuna felt great compassion to see his friends and relatives on the opposite side, whom he must kill to win this war. He became confused, spoke of the evils of war, and refused to fight or do his duty as a warrior.

Arjuna sat down on the back seat of the chariot with his mind overwhelmed with sorrow. (Verse 1.47)

***NOTE**: Some non-essential verses from Chapters 1 and 2 only have been omitted for ease of understanding the teachings of the Gita by the first time readers.*

CHAPTER 2

2. Spiritual knowledge

Sanjaya said: Lord Krishna spoke these words to Arjuna whose eyes were tearful and downcast, and who was overwhelmed with compassion and despair. (2.01) O King, Lord Krishna, as if smiling, spoke these words to distressed Arjuna in the midst of the two armies. (2.10)

Teachings of the Gita begins

Important verses are highlighted. First time readers should read and understand these verses first.

The Supreme Lord said: You grieve for those who are not worthy of grief; and yet speak words of wisdom. The wise grieve neither for the living nor for the dead. (2.11) There was never a time when these monarchs, you, or I did not exist, nor shall we ever cease to exist in the future. (2.12) Just as a living being acquires a childhood body, a youth body, and an old-age body during this life; similarly, it acquires another new body after death. The wise are not deluded by this. (2.13) The contacts of the senses with the sense objects give rise to the feelings of heat and cold, pain and pleasure. They are transitory and impermanent. Therefore, learn to endure them, O Arjuna, (2.14) because a calm person — who is not afflicted by these sense objects, and is steady in pain and pleasure — becomes fit for immortality, O Arjuna. (2.15)

The spirit is eternal, body is transitory

The invisible Spirit is eternal, and the visible world, including the physical body, is transitory. The reality of these two is indeed certainly seen by the seers of Truth. (2.16) The Spirit by which all this universe is pervaded is indestructible. No one can destroy the imperishable Spirit. (2.17) Bodies of the eternal, immutable, and incomprehensible Spirit are perishable. Therefore, fight, O Arjuna. (2.18) One who thinks that Spirit is a slayer, and one who thinks Spirit is slain, are both ignorant. Because Spirit neither slays nor is slain. (2.19) The Spirit is neither born nor does it die at any time. It does not come into being, or cease to exist. It is unborn, eternal, permanent, and primeval. The Spirit is not destroyed when the body is destroyed. (2.20) O Arjuna, how can a person who knows that the Spirit is indestructible, eternal, unborn, and immutable, kill anyone or cause anyone to be killed? (2.21)

Death and Reincarnation of the soul

Just as a person puts on new garments after discarding the old ones; similarly, the living entity acquires new bodies after casting away the old bodies. (2.22) Weapons do not cut this Spirit, fire does not burn it, water does not make it wet, and the wind does not make it dry. Spirit cannot be cut, burned, wet, or dried. It is eternal, all-pervading, unchanging, immovable, and primeval. (2.23-24) The Spirit is said to be unexplainable, incomprehensible, and unchanging. Knowing this Spirit as such, you should not grieve. (2.25)

Even if you think that this living being takes birth and dies perpetually, even then, O Arjuna, you should not grieve like this. Because, death is certain for one who is born, and birth is certain for one who dies; and the cycle of birth-death continues. Therefore, you should not lament over the inevitable. (2.26-27) All beings, O Arjuna, are unmanifest — invisible to our physical eyes — before birth and after death. They manifest between the birth and the death only. What is there to grieve about? (2.28) Some look upon

this Spirit as a wonder, another describes it as wonderful, and others hear of it as a wonder. Even after hearing about it very few people know it. (2.29) O Arjuna, the Spirit that dwells in the body of all beings is eternally indestructible. Therefore, you should not mourn for anybody. (2.30)

Duty of a warrior

Considering also your duty as a warrior, you should not waver. Because there is nothing more auspicious for a warrior than a righteous war. (2.31) Only the fortunate warriors, O Arjuna, get such an opportunity for a righteous war against evil that is like an open door to heaven. (2.32)

Commentary

The righteous war is not a religious war against the followers of other religions. The righteous war may be waged even against our own evil-doer kith and kin (RigVeda 6.75.19). Life is a continuous battle between the forces of evil and goodness. "Whosoever kills an innocent human being, it shall be regarded as if he has killed the entire humanity." (Surah 5.32).

It is better to die for a right cause and acquire the grace of sacrifice than to die an ordinary but compulsory death. The gates of heaven open wide for those who stand up to vindicate justice and righteousness (Dharma). Not to oppose an evil is to indirectly support it. Very similar ideas are expressed in other scriptures of the world. The Bible says: Happy are those who suffer persecution because they do what God requires. The kingdom of heaven belongs to them (MATTHEW 5.10). There is no sin in killing an aggressor. Whosoever helps and supports an aggressor is also an aggressor. Thus, all those who supported Kauravas were basically aggressors and deserved to be eliminated.

If you will not fight this righteous war, then you will fail in your duty, lose your reputation, and incur sin. (2.33) People will talk about your disgrace forever. To the honored, dishonor is worse than death. (2.34) The great warriors will think that you have retreated from the battle out of fear. Those who have greatly esteemed you will lose respect for you. (2.35) Your enemies will speak many unmentionable words and scorn your ability. What could be more painful to you than this? (2.36) You will go to heaven if killed in the line of duty, or you will enjoy the kingdom on the earth if victorious. Therefore, get up with a determination to fight, O Arjuna. (2.37) Treating pleasure and pain, gain and loss, and victory and defeat alike, engage yourself in your duty. By doing your duty this way, you will not incur sin. (2.38)

Importance of Karma-yoga, the selfless action

The wisdom of spiritual knowledge has been imparted to you, O Arjuna. Now listen to the wisdom of Karma-yoga, the selfless

service (Seva), endowed with which you will free yourself from the bondage or reactions of action (Karma). (2.39) In Karma-yoga, no effort is ever lost and there is no adverse effect. Even a little practice of this discipline protects one from the great fear of birth and death. (2.40) A Karma-yogi has a resolute determination for God-realization, O Arjuna, but the desires of one who works to enjoy the fruits of work are endless. (2.41)

Material and spiritual aspects of life

The misguided ones who delight in the melodious chanting of the Vedas or any scripture — without understanding its real purpose — think, O Arjuna, as if there is nothing else in it except the rituals for the sole purpose of obtaining heavenly enjoyment. (2.42) They are dominated by material desires and consider the attainment of heaven as the highest goal of life. They engage in specific rites for the sake of prosperity and enjoyment. Rebirth is the result of their action. (2.43) The resolute determination of Self-realization is not formed in the minds of those who are attached to pleasure and power and whose judgment is obscured by such ritualistic activities. (2.44) A portion of the Vedas deals with three modes or states of the material Nature. Become free from pairs of opposites; be ever balanced and unconcerned with the thoughts of acquisition and preservation. Rise above the three states, and be Self-conscious, O Arjuna. (2.45) To a Self-realized person, scriptures are as useful as a small reservoir of water when the water of a huge lake becomes available. (2.46)

Theory and practice of Karma-yoga

You have control over your respective duty only, but no control or claim over the results. The fruits of work should not be your only motive and you should never be inactive. (2.47) Do your duty to the best of your ability, O Arjuna, with your mind attached to the Lord, abandoning worry and attachment to the results, and remaining calm in both success and failure. The calmness of mind is called Karma-yoga. (2.48) Work done with selfish motives is inferior by far to selfless service or Karma-yoga. Therefore, be a Karma-yogi, O Arjuna. Those who work only to enjoy the fruits of their labor are, in truth, unhappy. Because, one has no control over the results. (2.49)

A true Karma-yogi becomes free from both vice and virtue in this very life. Therefore, strive for Karma-yoga. Working to the best of one's abilities without becoming attached to the fruits of work is called Karma-yoga. (2.50) Wise Karma-yogis are freed from the bondage of rebirth by renouncing attachment to the fruits of all work and attain a blissful divine state. (2.51) When your intellect completely pierces the veil of confusion, then you will become indifferent to what has been heard and what is to be heard from the scriptures. (2.52)

When your intellect, that is confused by the conflicting opinions and the ritualistic doctrine of the Vedas, shall stay steady and firm on concentrating on the Supreme Being, then you shall attain union with the Supreme Being in trance. (2.53) Arjuna said: O Krishna, what are the marks of an enlightened person whose intellect is steady? How does a person of steady intellect speak? How does such a person sit and walk? (2.54)

Marks of a Self-realized person

The Supreme Lord said: When one is completely free from all desires of the mind and is satisfied with the Eternal Being (God) by the joy of Eternal Being, then one is called an enlightened person, O Arjuna. (2.55) A person whose mind is unperturbed by sorrow, who does not crave pleasures — and who is completely free from attachment, fear, and anger— is called a sage of steady mind. (2.56) Those who are not attached to anything, who are neither elated by getting desired results, nor troubled by undesired results, their intellect is considered steady. (2.57) When one can completely withdraw the senses from its sense objects— as a tortoise withdraws its limbs into the shell for protection from dangers— then the intellect of such a person is considered steady. (2.58) The desire for sensual pleasures fades away if one abstains from sense enjoyment, but the craving for sense enjoyment remains. The craving also disappears from one who has known the Supreme Being. (2.59)

Dangers of unrestrained senses

Restless senses, O Arjuna, forcibly carry away the mind of even a wise person striving for perfection. (2.60) One should fix one's mind on Me with loving contemplation after bringing the senses under control. One's intellect becomes steady when one's senses are under complete control. (2.61) One develops attachment to sense objects by thinking about sense objects. Desire for sense objects comes from attachment to sense objects, and anger comes from unfulfilled desires. (2.62) Delusion or wild ideas arise from anger. The mind is bewildered by delusion. Reasoning is destroyed when the mind is bewildered. One falls from the right path when reasoning is destroyed. (2.63)

Peace through sense control and Self-knowledge

A disciplined person, enjoying sense objects with senses that are under control and free from likes and dislikes, attains tranquility. (2.64) All sorrows are destroyed upon attainment of tranquility. The intellect of such a tranquil person soon becomes completely steady and united with the Source. (2.65) There is neither Self-knowledge nor Self-perception to those who are not united with the Eternal Being. Without Self-perception there is no peace, and without peace there can be no happiness. (2.66)

The mind, when controlled by roving senses, steals away the intellect as a storm takes away a boat on the sea from its destination — the spiritual shore. (2.67) Therefore, O Arjuna, one's intellect becomes steady when the senses are completely withdrawn from its sense objects. (2.68) A yogi, the person of self-restraint, remains wakeful when it is night for all others. It is night for a yogi who sees when all others are wakeful. (2.69)

NOTE: What is considered real by a yogi is of no value for a worldly person and vice-versa.

One attains peace when all desires dissipate within the mind without creating any mental disturbance, just as river waters enter the full ocean without creating any disturbance. One who desires material objects is never peaceful. (2.70) One who abandons all desires, and becomes free from longing and the feeling of "i" and "my", attains peace. (2.71) O Arjuna, this is the superconscious state of mind. Attaining this state, one is no longer deluded. Gaining this state, even at the end of one's life, a person attains Nirvana (or becomes one with the Absolute). (2.72)

CHAPTER 3

3. Path of Selfless service, Karma-yoga

Arjuna said: If You consider acquiring spiritual knowledge is better than working, then why do You want me to engage in this horrible war, O Krishna? You seem to confuse my mind by apparently conflicting words. Tell me, decisively, one thing by which I may attain the Supreme. (3.01-02) The Supreme Lord said: In this world, O Arjuna, a twofold path of spiritual discipline has been stated by Me in the past — the path of Self-knowledge for the contemplative, introverts and the path of unselfish work (Seva, Karma-yoga) for all others. (3.03) One does not attain freedom from the bondage of Karma by merely abstaining from work. No one attains perfection by merely giving up work. (3.04) Because no one can remain actionless even for a moment, everyone is driven to action — helplessly indeed — by the forces of nature. (3.05) The deluded ones, who restrain their organs of action but mentally dwell upon the sense enjoyment, are called hypocrites. (3.06)

Why one should serve others?

One who controls the senses by a trained and purified mind and intellect, and engages the organs of action to selfless service, is superior, O Arjuna. (3.07) Perform your obligatory duty because working is indeed better than sitting idle. Even the maintenance of your body would be impossible without work. (3.08) Human beings are bound by work that is not performed as a selfless service. Therefore, O Arjuna, becoming free from attachment to the fruits of work, do your duty efficiently as a service to Me. (3.09)

The first commandment of the creator

Brahma, the creator, in the beginning created human beings together with selfless service (Seva, sacrifice) and said: By Seva or sacrifice of self-interest you shall prosper, and Seva shall fulfill all your desires. (3.10) Help the celestial controllers (Devas) with selfless service and they will help you. Thus helping each other, you shall attain the Supreme goal of human life. (3.11) The celestial controllers, pleased by selfless service, will give you desired objects even without asking for it. One who enjoys the gift of celestials without offering them anything in return is, indeed, a thief. (3.12) The righteous who eat the remnants of selfless service are freed from all sins, but the impious who cook food only for themselves (without first offering to Me, or sharing with others), in truth, eat sin (3.13). The physical body of living beings is made up of and sustained by food; food is created by God from five basic elements. God is pleased by the sacrifice (Qurbani) of self-interest: The selfless philanthropic work, and blesses selfless persons. Selfless work or sacrifice is our duty. Duty is prescribed in the scriptures. The scriptures come from God. Thus, the all-pervading God is ever present in selfless service, Seva. (3.14-15) One who does not help to keep the wheel of creation in motion by sacrificial duty and who rejoices sense pleasures only, that sinful person lives in vain, O Arjuna. (3.16) For a Self-realized person, who rejoices only with God, who is delighted with God and who is content with God, there is no duty. (3.17) Such a person has no interest, whatsoever, in what is done or what is not done. A Self-realized person does not depend on anybody, except God, for anything. (3.18)

Leaders should set an example

Therefore, always perform your duty efficiently and without any attachment to the results, because by doing work without attachment one attains the Supreme Being. (3.19) King Janaka and others attained perfection (or Self-realization) by selfless service (Karma-yoga) alone. You should also perform your duty with a view to guide people, and for universal welfare of the society. (3.20) Whatever noble persons do, others follow. Whatever standard they set up, the world follows. (3.21) O Arjuna, there is nothing in the three worlds (heaven, earth, and the lower regions) that should be done by Me, nor there is anything that I should obtain, yet I engage in action. (3.22) If I do not engage in action relentlessly, O Arjuna, people would follow My path. These worlds would perish if I do not work, and I would be the cause of confusion and destruction of all these people. (3.23-24) As the ignorant work, O Arjuna, with attachment to the fruits of work, so the wise should work without attachment, for the welfare of the society. (3.25) The wise should not unsettle the minds of the ignorant, who are attached to the fruits of

work, but should inspire others by performing all works, efficiently, without attachment to results. (3.26)

All works are the works of Nature

All work is done by the energy and power of nature, but due to delusion of ignorance, people assume themselves to be the doer and thus incur sin or Karmic bondage. (3.27) One who knows the truth, O Arjuna, about the role of the forces of nature and work, does not become attached to work, knowing very well that it's the forces of nature that work with their instruments — our organs. (3.28) Those who are deluded by the illusive power (Maya) of Nature become attached to the work done by the forces of nature. The wise should not disturb the mind of the ignorant whose knowledge is imperfect. (3.29) Do your duty — dedicating all work to Me — in a spiritual frame of mind, free from desire, attachment, and mental grief. (3.30) Those who always practice this teaching of Mine — with faith, sincerity and free from complain — are freed from the bondage of Karma. But those who carp at My teaching and do not practice it, should be considered ignorant of all knowledge, senseless, and lost. (3.31-32) All beings follow their nature. Even the wise act according to their own nature. What, then, is the value of sense restraint? (3.33)

Two stumbling blocks on the path

Likes and dislikes for sense objects remain in the senses. One should not come under the control of these two, because they are, indeed, two major stumbling blocks on one's path of Self-realization. (3.34) One's inferior natural work is better than superior unnatural work. Death in carrying out one's natural work is useful. Unnatural work produces too much stress. (3.35)

Lust is the origin of sin

Arjuna said: O Krishna, what impels one to commit sin as if unwillingly and forced against one's will? (3.36) The Supreme Lord said: It is lust (or intense desire for material and sensual pleasures), born out of passion, that becomes anger when unfulfilled. Lust is insatiable and is a great devil. Know this as the enemy. (3.37) As the fire is covered by smoke, as a mirror by dust, and as an embryo by the amnion, similarly Self-knowledge becomes obscured by lust. (3.38) O Arjuna, Self-knowledge becomes covered by this insatiable fire of lust, the eternal enemy of the wise. (3.39) The senses, the mind, and the intellect are said to be the seat of lust. Lust — by controlling the senses, the mind, and the intellect — deludes a person by veiling Self-knowledge. (3.40) Therefore, O Arjuna, by controlling the senses first, kill this devil of material desire that destroys Self-knowledge and Self-realization. (3.41)

How to control lust

The senses are said to be superior to the body; the mind is superior to the senses; the intellect is superior to the mind; and

Spirit is superior to the intellect. (3.42) Thus, knowing the Spirit to be superior to the intellect, and controlling the mind by the intellect that is purified by spiritual practices, one must kill this mighty enemy, lust, O Arjuna. (3.43)

CHAPTER 4

4. Path of renunciation with Self-knowledge

Karma-yoga is an ancient law

The Supreme Lord said: I taught this Karma-yoga, the eternal science of selfless action, to King Vivasvan. Vivasvan taught it to Manu. Manu taught it to Ikshvaku. Thus handed down in succession the saintly Kings knew this. After a long time the science of Karma-yoga was lost from this earth. Today I have described the same ancient science to you because you are my sincere devotee and friend. Karma-yoga is the supreme secret indeed. (4.01-03) Arjuna said: You were born later, but Vivasvan was born in ancient time. How am I to understand that You taught this Karma-yoga in the beginning of the creation? (4.04)

The purpose of incarnation of God

The Supreme Lord said: Both you and I have taken many births. I remember them all, O Arjuna, but you do not remember. (4.05) Though I am eternal, immutable, and the Lord of all beings, yet I manifest myself by controlling My own material Nature, using My divine potential energy (Maya). (4.06) Whenever there is a decline of Dharma (Righteousness) and a predominance of Adharma (or Unrighteousness), O Arjuna, then I manifest Myself. I appear from time to time for protecting the good, for transforming the wicked, and for establishing world order (Dharma). (4.07-08) The one who truly understands My transcendental appearance and activities of creation, maintenance, and dissolution, attains My supreme abode and is not born again after leaving this body, O Arjuna. (4.09) Many have become free from attachment, fear, anger, and attained salvation by taking refuge in Me, becoming fully absorbed in My thoughts, and becoming purified by the fire of Self-knowledge. (4.10)

Path of worship and prayer

With whatever motive people worship Me, I fulfill their desires accordingly. People worship Me with different motives. (4.11) Those who long for success in their work here on the earth worship the celestial controllers. Success in work comes quickly in this human world. (4.12) The four divisions — based on aptitude and vocation — of human society were created by Me. Though I am the author of this system of the division of labor, one should know that I do nothing and I am eternal. (4.13) Work or Karma does not bind Me, because I have no desire for the fruits of work. The one who fully understands and practices this truth is also not bound by Karma. (4.14) The ancient seekers of liberation also performed

their duties with this understanding. Therefore, you should do your duty as the ancients did. (4.15)

Attached, detached, and forbidden action

Even the wise ones are confused about what is action and what is inaction. Therefore, I shall clearly explain what is action, knowing that one shall be liberated from the evil of birth and death. (4.16) The true nature of action is very difficult to understand. Therefore, one should know the nature of attached or selfish action, the nature of detached or selfless action, and also the nature of forbidden action. (4.17)

A Karma-yogi is not subject to the Karmic laws

The one who sees inaction in action, and action in inaction, is a wise person. Such a person is a yogi and has accomplished everything. (4.18)

To see inaction in action and vice versa is to understand that the Lord does all the work indirectly through His power by using us. He is the inactive actor. We are actively inactive, because we cannot do anything without the flow of His power. Therefore, we are not the doer, just an instrument in His hands.

A person, whose desires have become selfless by being roasted in the fire of Self-knowledge, is called a sage by the wise. (4.19) The one who has abandoned attachment to the fruits of work, and remains ever content and dependent on no one but God, such a person — though engaged in activity — does nothing at all and incurs no Karmic reaction, good or bad. (4.20) The one who is free from desires, whose mind and senses are under control, and who has renounced all proprietorship, does not incur sin — the Karmic reaction — by doing bodily action. (4.21) Content with whatever gain comes naturally by His will, unaffected by pairs of opposites, free from envy, calm in success and failure, though engaged in work, such a Karma-yogi is not bound by Karma. (4.22) The one who is free from attachment, whose mind is fixed in Self-knowledge, who does work as a service (Seva) to the Lord, all Karmic bonds of such a philanthropic person (Karma-yogi) dissolve away. (4.23) God shall be realized by the one who considers everything as a manifestation or an act of God. (Also see 9.16) (4.24)

Different types of spiritual practices

Some yogis perform the service of worship to celestial controllers (Devas, guardian angels), while others study scriptures for Self-knowledge. Some restrain their senses and give up their sensual pleasures. Others perform breathing and other yogic exercises. Some give charity and offer their wealth as a sacrifice. (4.25-

28) Those who are engaged in yogic practices, reach the breathless state of trance (Samadhi) by offering inhalation into exhalation and exhalation into inhalation as a sacrifice using yogic techniques. (4.29) Others restrict their diet and offer their inhalations as sacrifice into their inhalations. All these people are the knowers of sacrifice, and are purified by their sacrifice. (4.30) Those who perform selfless service obtain the nectar of Self-knowledge as a result of their sacrifice and attain the Eternal Being. O Arjuna, even this world is not a happy place for the non-sacrificer, how can the other world be? (4.31) Many types of spiritual disciplines are described in the Vedas. Know them all to be born from Karma or the action of body, mind, and senses. Knowing this, you shall attain Nirvana. (4.32)

A superior spiritual practice

The acquisition and propagation of Self-knowledge are superior to any material gain or gift, O Arjuna. Because all actions in their entirety culminate in knowledge. (4.33) Acquire this spiritual knowledge from a Self-realized guru by humble reverence, by sincere inquiry, and by service. The wise ones who have realized the Truth will teach you. (4.34) After knowing the Truth, O Arjuna, you shall not again become deluded like this. By this knowledge you shall behold the entire creation first within Me, the Supreme Being, then within your own higher self and then see Me alone in everything. (4.35) Even if one is the most sinful of all sinners, one shall yet cross over the ocean of sin by the raft of Self-knowledge. (4.36) As the blazing fire reduces wood to ashes; similarly, the fire of Self-knowledge reduces all bonds of Karma (or sin) to ashes, O Arjuna. (4.37)

Spiritual knowledge is revealed to a Karma-yogi

In truth, there is no purifier in this world like the true knowledge of the Supreme Being. One who becomes purified by Karma-yoga discovers this knowledge within, naturally, in due course of time. (4.38) The one who has faith and is sincere in yogic practices and has control over the senses, gains this spiritual knowledge. Having gained this knowledge, one at once attains supreme peace. (4.39) The irrational, the faithless, and the atheist perish. There is neither this world, nor the world beyond, nor happiness for the disbeliever. (4.40)

Knowledge, Karma-yoga are needed for Nirvana

Work (Karma) does not bind a person who has renounced work by renouncing attachment to the fruits of work, and whose doubts about the Self are completely destroyed by Self-knowledge, O Arjuna. (4.41) Therefore, cut the ignorance-born doubt about the Supreme Being abiding in your mind by the sword of Self-knowledge, resort to Karma-yoga, and get up for the war, O Arjuna. (4.42)

CHAPTER 5

5. Path of renunciation

Arjuna said: O Krishna, You praise spiritual knowledge and also performance of selfless service. Tell me, definitely, which one is the better of the two. (5.01) The Supreme Lord said: The path of Self-knowledge and the path of selfless service both lead to the supreme goal. But, of the two, selfless service is superior to Self-knowledge. (5.02) A person should be considered a true Samnyasi (renunciant) who neither likes nor dislikes. One is easily liberated from Karmic bondage by becoming free from the pairs of opposites, O Arjuna. (5.03)

Both paths lead to the Supreme

The ignorant — not the wise — consider the path of Self-knowledge (or renunciation) and the path of selfless service (Karma-yoga) as different from each other. The person who has truly mastered one, gets the benefits of both. (5.04) Whatever goal a Samnyasi reaches, a Karma-yogi also reaches the same goal. Therefore, the one who sees the path of renunciation and the path of unselfish work as the same, really sees. (5.05) But, true renunciation, O Arjuna, is difficult to attain without Karma-yoga. A sage equipped with Karma-yoga quickly attains God. (5.06) A Karma-yogi whose mind is pure, whose mind and senses are under control, and who sees one and the same Eternal Being in all beings, is not bound by Karma though intensely engaged in work. (5.07)

A Karma-yogi works for God only

The wise (or Samnyasi) who knows the truth thinks: "I do nothing at all". In seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, walking, sleeping, breathing; and speaking, giving, taking, as well as opening and closing the eyes, a Samnyasi believes that only the senses are operating upon their objects. (5.08-09) One who does all work as an offering to the Lord — abandoning attachment to the results — remains untouched by Karmic reaction or sin as a lotus leaf never gets wet by water, while living in it. (5.10) The Karma-yogis perform action —without attachment — with their body, mind, intellect, and senses only for self-purification. (5.11) A Karma-yogi attains Supreme Bliss by abandoning attachment to the fruits of work; while others, who are attached to the fruits of work, become bound by selfish work. (5.12)

The path of Self-knowledge

A person who has completely renounced attachment to the fruits of all works, lives happily, neither performing nor directing any action. (5.13) The Lord neither creates the urge for action, nor the feeling of doership, nor the attachment to the results of action in people. All these are done by the powers of Nature. (5.14) The Lord does not take the responsibility for the good or evil deeds of

anybody. The Self-knowledge becomes covered by the veil of ignorance; thereby people become deluded and do evil deeds. (5.15) Spiritual knowledge destroys the ignorance of the Self and reveals the Supreme, just as the Sun reveals the beauty of objects of the world. (5.16) Persons whose mind and intellect are totally merged with the Source, who are firmly devoted to the Source, who have the Source as their supreme goal and sole refuge, and whose impurities are destroyed by the knowledge of the Source, do not take birth again. (5.17)

Additional marks of an enlightened person

An enlightened person — by perceiving the Lord in all — looks at a learned and humble priest, an outcast, even a cow, an elephant, or a dog with an equal eye. (5.18) Everything has been accomplished in this very life by the one whose mind is set in equality. Such a person has realized God, because God is flawless and impartial. (5.19) One who neither rejoices on obtaining what is pleasant, nor grieves on obtaining the unpleasant, who has a steady mind, who is undeluded, and who is a knower of the Supreme Being, such a person eternally abides with the Supreme Being. (5.20) Such a person who is in union with the Supreme Being becomes unattached to sensual pleasures by discovering the joy of the Self through contemplation, and enjoys spiritual bliss. (5.21) Sensual pleasures are, in truth, the source of misery, and have a beginning and an end. Therefore, the wise do not rejoice sensual pleasures. (5.22) One who is able to withstand the impulse of lust and anger before death is a yogi, and a happy person. (5.23) One who finds happiness with the Eternal Being, who rejoices Eternal Being within, and who is illuminated by Self-knowledge; such a yogi attains Nirvana, and goes to Eternal Being. (5.24) Seers whose sins (or imperfections) are destroyed, whose doubts have been dispelled by Self-knowledge, whose minds are disciplined, and who are engaged in the welfare of all beings, attain the Supreme Being. (5.25) They, who are free from lust and anger, who have subdued the mind and senses, and who have known the Self, easily attain Nirvana. (5.26)

Path of meditation and contemplation

A sage is liberated by renouncing all material enjoyments, focusing the eyes and the mind between the eye-brows, equalizing the breath moving through the nostrils by using yogic techniques, keeping the senses, mind, and intellect under control, having salvation as the prime goal, and by becoming free from lust, anger, greed and fear. (5.27-28) My devotee attains peace by knowing Me, the Supreme Being as the enjoyer of sacrifices and austerities, as the great Lord of all the universe, and the friend of all beings. (5.29)

CHAPTER 6

6. Path of meditation

A Karma-yogi is also a renunciant

The Supreme Lord said: One who performs the prescribed duty without seeking its fruit only for personal enjoyment, is a renunciant (Samnyasi) and a Karma-yogi. One does not become Samnyasi merely by not lighting the fire, and one does not become a yogi merely by abstaining from work. (6.01) O Arjuna, what they call renunciation (Samnyasa) is also known as Karma-yoga. No one becomes a Karma-yogi who has not renounced the selfish motive behind an action. (6.02)

A definition of yoga and yogi

For the wise who seeks to attain yoga of meditation or calmness of mind, Karma-yoga is said to be the means. For the one who has attained yoga, the calmness becomes the means of Self-realization. A person is said to have attained yogic perfection when one has no desire for sensual pleasures or attachment to the fruits of work, and has renounced all selfish motives behind any action. (6.03-04)

Mind is both a friend and an enemy

One must elevate — and not degrade — oneself by one's own mind. The mind alone is one's friend as well as one's enemy. The mind is the friend of those who have control over it, and the same mind acts like an enemy for those who do not control it. (6.05-06) One who has control over the lower self — the mind and senses — is tranquil in heat and cold, in pleasure and pain, and in honor and dishonor, and remains ever steadfast with the supreme Self. (6.07) A person is called yogi who has both Self-knowledge and Self-realization, who is calm, who has control over the mind and senses, and to whom a clod, a stone, and gold are the same. (6.08) A person is considered superior who is impartial towards companions, friends, enemies, neutrals, arbiters, haters, relatives, saints, and sinners. (6.09)

Techniques of meditation

A yogi, seated in solitude and alone, should constantly try to contemplate the Supreme Being after bringing the mind and senses under control, and becoming free from desires and proprietorship. (6.10) One should sit on his or her own firm seat that is neither too high nor too low, covered with dry grass, a deerskin, and a cloth, one over the other, in a clean spot. Sitting there in a comfortable position and concentrating the mind on God, controlling the thoughts and the activities of the senses, one should practice meditation for self-purification. (6.11-12) One should sit by holding the waist, spine, chest, neck, and head erect, motionless and steady; fix the eyes and the mind steadily in front of the nostrils, without looking around; make your mind serene and fearless; practice celibacy; have the mind under control; think of Me; and

have Me as the supreme goal. (6.13-14) Thus, by always practicing to keep the mind fixed on Me, the yogi whose mind is subdued attains peace of Nirvana and comes to Me. (6.15)

This yoga is not possible, O Arjuna, for the one who eats too much or who does not eat at all; who sleeps too much or who keeps awake. (6.16) But for the one who is moderate in eating, recreation, working, sleeping, and waking, the yoga of meditation destroys all sorrow. (6.17) A person is said to have achieved yoga, the union with the Eternal Being, when the perfectly disciplined mind becomes free from all desires and gets completely united with God in Samadhi (trance). (6.18) A lamp in a spot sheltered by the Eternal Being from the wind of desires does not flicker; this simile is used for the subdued mind of a yogi, practicing meditation on the Eternal Being. (6.19)

When the mind, disciplined by the practice of meditation, becomes steady, one becomes content with the Eternal Being by beholding Him with purified intellect. (6.20) One feels infinite bliss that is perceivable only through the intellect and is beyond the reach of the senses. After realizing the Eternal Being, one is never separated from the Absolute Reality. (6.21) After Self-realization (SR), one does not regard any other gain superior to SR. Established in SR, one is not moved even by the greatest calamity. (6.22) The state of severance of union with sorrow is called yoga. This yoga should be practiced with firm determination and without any mental reservation. (6.23) One gradually attains tranquility of mind by totally abandoning all selfish desires, completely restraining the senses from the sense objects by the intellect, keeping the mind fully absorbed in the Eternal Being by means of a well-trained and purified intellect, and thinking of Me. (6.24-25) Wheresoever this restless and unsteady mind wanders away during meditation, one should just witness it under the supervision of the Self. (6.26)

Who is a yogi?

Supreme bliss comes to a Self-realized yogi, whose mind is tranquil, whose desires are under control, and who is free from sin (or faults). (6.27) Such a sinless yogi, who constantly engages his or her mind and intellect with the Eternal Being, easily enjoys the infinite bliss of contact with God. (6.28) Because of perceiving the omnipresent Eternal Being abiding in all beings, and all beings abiding in the Eternal Being; a yogi, who is in union with the Eternal Being, sees every being with an equal eye. (6.29) Those who perceive Me in everything and behold everything in Me, are not separated from Me, and I am not separated from them. (6.30) The non-dualists, who adore Me as abiding in all beings, abide in Me irrespective of their mode of living. (6.31) One is considered the best yogi who regards every being like oneself and who can feel the pain and pleasures of others as one's own, O Arjuna. (6.32)

Two methods to subdue the mind

Arjuna said: O Krishna, You have said that the yoga of meditation is characterized by the calmness of mind, but due to restlessness of mind, I do not perceive the steady state of mind. Because the mind, indeed, is very unsteady, turbulent, powerful, and obstinate, O Krishna. I think restraining the mind is as difficult as restraining the wind. (6.33-34) The Supreme Lord said: Undoubtedly, O Arjuna, the mind is restless and difficult to restrain, but it is subdued by constant vigorous spiritual practice with perseverance, Self-knowledge and detachment, O Arjuna. (6.35) In My opinion, yoga is difficult for the one whose mind is not subdued. However, yoga is attainable by the person of subdued mind by striving through proper means. (6.36)

Destination of unsuccessful yogi

Arjuna said: The faithful who deviates from the path of meditation and fails to attain yogic perfection due to unsubdued mind — what is the destination of such a person, O Krishna? (6.37) Does he not perish like a dispersing cloud, O Krishna, having lost both worldly and heavenly pleasures; supportless and bewildered on the path of Self-realization? (6.38) O Krishna, only You are able to completely dispel this doubt of mine because there is none, other than You, who can dispel this doubt. (6.39) The Supreme Lord said: There is no destruction, O Arjuna, for a yogi either here or hereafter. A spiritualist is never put to grief, My dear friend. (6.40)

The unsuccessful yogi is reborn in the house of the pious and prosperous after attaining heaven and living there for many years, or such a yogi is born in a family of enlightened yogis. A birth like this is very difficult, indeed, to obtain in this world. (6.41-42) There a yogi regains the knowledge acquired in the previous life and strives again to achieve perfection, O Arjuna. (6.43) The unsuccessful yogi is instinctively carried towards the Eternal Being by virtue of the impressions (Samskara) of yogic practices of previous lives. Even the inquirer of yoga — the union with God — surpasses those who perform Vedic rituals. (6.44) The yogi who diligently strives, becomes completely free from all sins or imperfections after gradually perfecting through many incarnations, and reaches the Supreme Abode. (6.45)

Who is the best yogi?

The yogi is superior to the ascetics. The yogi is superior to the scholars. The yogi is superior to the ritualists. Therefore, O Arjuna, be a yogi. (6.46) I consider the yogi-devotee — who lovingly contemplates Me with supreme faith, and whose mind is ever absorbed in Me — to be the best of all the yogis. (6.47)

CHAPTER 7

7. Self-knowledge and enlightenment

The Supreme Lord said: O Arjuna, listen how you shall know Me fully without any doubt, with your mind absorbed in Me, taking refuge in Me, and performing yogic practices. (7.01) I shall impart you Self-knowledge, together with enlightenment, after comprehending that nothing more remains to be known in this world. (7.02) Scarcely one out of thousands of persons strives for perfection of Self-realization. Scarcely one among those successful strivers truly understands Me. (7.03)

Definitions of matter, consciousness, and spirit

The mind, intellect, ego, ether, air, fire, water, and earth are the eightfold transformation (or division) of My material energy (Prakriti). (7.04) The material energy is My lower Nature. My other higher Nature is Spirit (Purusha) by which this entire universe is sustained, O Arjuna. (7.05) Know that all creatures have evolved from this twofold energy; and I, the Supreme Being, am the source of origin, as well as dissolution of the entire universe. (7.06)

The Supreme spirit is the basis of everything

There is nothing higher than Me, O Arjuna. Everything in the universe is strung on Me like jewels are strung on the thread of a necklace. (7.07) O Arjuna, I am the sapidity in the water, I am the radiance in the sun and the moon, the sacred syllable 'OM' in all the Vedas, the sound in the ether, and potency in human beings. I am the sweet fragrance in the earth. I am the heat in the fire, the life in all living beings, and the austerity in the ascetics. (7.08-09) O Arjuna, know Me to be the eternal seed of all creatures. I am the intelligence of the intelligent and the brilliance of the brilliant. I am the strength of the strong that is devoid of lust and attachment. I am lust (Cupid) in human beings that is in accord with righteousness (Dharma) for the sacred and sole purpose of procreation after marriage, O Arjuna. (7.10-11) Know that three modes (Gunas) of Nature — goodness, passion, and ignorance — also emanate from Me. I am not dependent on or affected by the Gunas, but the Gunas are dependent on Me. (7.12) Human beings are deluded by the various aspects of these three Gunas of Nature; therefore, they do not know Me, who is eternal and above these Gunas. (7.13)

Who seeks God?

This divine power (Maya) of Mine, consisting of three modes (Gunas) of Nature, is very difficult to overcome. Only those who surrender unto Me can easily cross over this Maya. (7.14) The evil doers, the ignorant, the lowest persons who are attached to demonic nature and whose power of discrimination has been taken away by divine illusive power (Maya) do not worship or seek Me. (7.15)

Four types of virtuous ones worship or seek Me, O Arjuna. They are: The distressed, the seeker of Self-knowledge, the seeker of

wealth, and the enlightened one who has experienced the Supreme. (7.16) Among them the enlightened devotee, who is ever united with Me and whose devotion is single-minded, is the best, because I am very dear to the enlightened, and the enlightened is also very dear to Me. (7.17) All these seekers are indeed noble, but I regard the enlightened devotee as My very Self. One who is steadfast becomes one with Me and abides in My supreme abode. (7.18) After many births the enlightened one resorts to Me by realizing that everything is, indeed, My manifestation. Such a great soul is very rare. (7.19) Persons whose judgement has been carried away by various desires, impelled by their Karmic impression (Samskara), resort to celestial controllers and practice various religious rites. (7.20)

God can be seen in any image of worship

Whosoever desires to worship whatever deity (using any name, form, and method) with faith, I make their faith steady in that very deity. Endowed with steady faith, they worship that deity and fulfil their wishes through that deity. Those wishes are, indeed, granted only by Me. (7.21-22) Such material gains of these less intelligent human beings are temporary. The worshipers of celestial controllers go to celestial controllers, but My devotees certainly come to Me. (7.23)

The ignorant ones — unable to understand My immutable, incomparable, incomprehensible and transcendental form, assume that I am formless and take form just as humans do. (7.24) Concealed by My divine power (Maya), I do not reveal Myself to the ignorant ones, who do not know and understand My unborn, eternal, transcendental form and personality — and consider Me formless! (7.25)

I know, O Arjuna, the beings of the past, of the present, and those of the future, but no one really knows Me. (7.26) All beings in this world are in utter ignorance due to delusion of pairs of opposites born of likes and dislikes, O Arjuna. But persons of unselfish deeds, whose Karma or sin has come to an end, become free from the delusion of pairs of opposites and worship Me with firm resolve. (7.27-28) Those who strive for freedom from the cycles of birth, old age, and death by taking refuge in Me; fully comprehend Eternal Being, the nature of Eternal Being, and Karma, the power of Eternal Being. (7.29) The steadfast persons who know Me as everything: The mortal beings, temporal Divine Beings, the Supersoul, even at the time of death, attain Me. (7.30)

CHAPTER 8

8. The eternal being, God

Arjuna said: O Krishna, who is the Eternal Being? What is the nature of the Eternal Being? What is Karma? Who are the mortal

beings? And who are Divine Beings? Who is the Supersoul, and how does He dwell in the body? How can You be remembered at the time of death by those who have control over their minds, O Krishna? (8.01-02)

Definitions of supreme spirit, spirit, individual soul

The Supreme Lord said: The immutable Spirit is called Eternal Being or God. The nature, including the inherent power of cognition and desire, of God is called Adhyatma. The creative power of God that causes manifestation of living entities is called Karma. (8.03) Mortal beings are called Adhibhuta. The expansions of Divine Personality are called Divine Beings. I am the Supersoul residing inside every cell of living beings as the supreme controller, O Arjuna. (8.04)

Theory of reincarnation and Karma

The one who remembers Me exclusively, even while leaving the body at the time of death, attains Me; there is no doubt about it. (8.05) Remembering whatever object one leaves the body at the end of life, one attains that object, O Arjuna. Because of the constant thought of that object, one remembers that object at the end of life and achieves it. (8.06)

A simple method of God-realization

Therefore, always remember Me and do your duty. You shall certainly attain Me if your mind and intellect are ever focused on Me. (8.07) By contemplating on Me with an unwavering mind that is disciplined by the practice of meditation, one attains the Supreme Being, O Arjuna. (8.08) One who meditates on the Supreme Being — as the omniscient, the oldest, the controller, smaller than the smallest and bigger than the biggest, sustainer of everything, the inconceivable, self-luminous like the sun, and beyond material reality — at the time of death with steadfast mind and devotion; making the flow of bioimpulses (life forces, Prana) rise up to the middle of two eye brows (or the sixth Chakra) by the power of yoga and holding there, attains the Supreme Divine Person. (8.09-10) I shall briefly explain the process to attain the supreme abode that the knowers of the Veda call immutable; into which the ascetics, freed from attachment, enter; and desiring which, people lead a life of celibacy. (8.11)

Attain salvation by meditating on God

When one leaves the physical body by controlling all the senses, focusing the mind on God, engaged in yogic practice, meditating on Me and uttering OM — the sacred monosyllable sound power of Eternal Being — one attains the supreme abode. (8.12-13) I am easily attainable, O Arjuna, by that ever steadfast yogi who always thinks of e and whose mind does not go elsewhere. (8.14) After attaining Me, the great souls do not incur rebirth in this miserable transitory world because they have attained the

highest perfection. (8.15) The dwellers of all the worlds — up to and including the world of Brahma, the creator — are subject to the miseries of repeated birth and death. But, after attaining Me, O Arjuna, one does not take birth again. (8.16)

Everything in the creation is cyclic

Those who know that the day of the creator (Brahma) lasts one thousand Yugas (or 4.32 billion solar years) and that his night also lasts one thousand Yugas, they are the knowers of day and night. (8.17) All manifestations come out of the primary material Nature (Adi-Prakriti) at the arrival of the day of Brahma, the Creative Power, and they again merge into the same at the coming of Brahma's night. (8.18) The same multitude of beings comes into existence again and again at the arrival of the day of the creator (Brahma); and are annihilated, inevitably, at the arrival of Brahma's night. (8.19)

There is another eternal existence — higher than the changeable material Nature (Prakriti) — that does not perish when all created beings perish. This is called the Eternal Being. This is also said to be the supreme abode. Those who attain My supreme abode do not take birth again. (8.20-21) This supreme abode, O Arjuna, is attainable by unswerving devotion to Me, within which all beings exist and by which all this universe is pervaded. (8.22)

Two basic paths of departure after death

O Arjuna, now I shall describe different paths departing by which, after death, the yogis do or do not come back. (8.23) Passing gradually, after death, through celestial controllers of fire, light, daytime, the bright lunar fortnight, and the six months of the northern solstice of the sun, yogis who know the Self attain supreme abode and do not come back to earth. (8.24) Passing gradually, after death, through celestial controllers of smoke, night, the dark lunar fortnight, and the six months of southern solstice of the sun, the righteous person attains heaven and comes back to earth again. (8.25) The path of light of Self-knowledge and the path of darkness of ignorance are thought to be the world's two eternal paths. The former leads to salvation (Mukti, Nirvana), and the latter leads to rebirth. (8.26)

Spiritual knowledge leads to salvation

Knowing these two paths, O Arjuna, a yogi is not bewildered at all. Therefore, O Arjuna, be steadfast in yoga (union) with Me at all times. (8.27) The yogi who knows all this goes beyond getting the benefits of the study of the Vedas, performance of sacrifices, austerities, and charities, and attains My Supreme Eternal Abode. (8.28)

CHAPTER 9

9. Supreme knowledge and the big mystery

The Supreme Lord said: I shall reveal to you, who do not disbelieve, the most profound, secret, spiritual knowledge, together with spiritual experience. Knowing this, you will be freed from the miseries of worldly existence. (9.01)

Knowledge of the supreme is the biggest mystery

This Self-knowledge is the king of all knowledge, is the most secret, is very sacred, can be perceived by instinct, conforms to righteousness (Dharma), is very easy to practice, and is timeless. (9.02) O Arjuna, those who have no faith in this knowledge do not attain Me and follow the cycles of birth and death. (9.03) This entire universe is an expansion of Mine. All beings depend on Me. I do not depend on them, because I am the highest of all. (9.04) Look at the power of My divine mystery; in reality, I — the sustainer and creator of all beings — do not depend on them, and they also do not depend on Me. (9.05)

NOTE: It's like a gold-chain depends on gold, and milk products depend on milk. In fact, the gold-chain does not depend on gold; the chain is nothing but gold! Similarly, matter and energy are different as well as non-different.

Perceive that all beings remain in Me, without any connection or contact, as the mighty wind, moving everywhere in the sky, eternally remains in space. (9.06)

The theory of evolution and involution

All beings merge into My Adi-Prakriti (primary material Nature) at the end of a cycle of just over 311 trillion solar years, O Arjuna, and I create them again at the beginning of the next cycle. (9.07) I create the entire multitude of beings again and again with the help of My material Nature. These beings are under control of the three modes of material Nature. (9.08) These acts of creation do not bind Me, O Arjuna, because I remain indifferent and unattached to those acts. (9.09) The divine kinetic energy (Maya) — with the help of material Nature — creates all animate and inanimate objects under My supervision; thus, the creation keeps on going, O Arjuna. (9.10)

The ways of the wise and of the ignorant

Ignorant persons hate Me when I appear in human form because they do not know My spiritual nature as the great Lord of all beings and take Me for an ordinary human. They have false hopes, false actions, false knowledge, and delusive qualities (See 16.04-18) of fiends and demons and are unable to recognize Me. (9.11-12) But great souls, O Arjuna, who possess divine qualities (See 16.01-03), know Me as immutable, as both the material and efficient cause of creation, and worship Me single-mindedly with loving devotion. (9.13) Persons of firm resolve worship Me with ever

steadfast devotion by always singing My glories, striving to attain Me, and prostrating before Me with devotion. (9.14) Some worship Me by acquiring and propagating Self-knowledge. Others worship the infinite as the One in all (or non-dual), as the master of all (or dual), and in various other ways. (9.15)

Everything is a manifestation of God

I am the ritual, I am the sacrifice, I am the offering, I am the herb, I am the mantra, I am the clarified butter, I am the fire, and I am the oblation. I am the supporter of the universe, the father, the mother, and the grandfather. I am the object of knowledge, the sacred syllable 'OM', and also the Vedas. I am the goal, the supporter, the Lord, the witness, the abode, the refuge, the friend, the origin, the dissolution, the foundation, the substratum, and the immutable seed. (9.16-18) I give heat. I send, as well as withhold, the rain. I am immortality, as well as death. I am also both the absolute and the temporal, O Arjuna. (9.19)

The Supreme Being has become everything!

Attaining salvation by devotional love

The performers of rituals prescribed in the Vedas, the drinkers of the nectar of devotion, whose sins are cleansed, worship Me by doing good deeds for gaining heaven. As a result of their meritorious deeds, they go to heaven and enjoy celestial sense pleasures. (9.20) They return to the mortal world — after enjoying the wide world of heavenly pleasures — upon exhaustion of their good Karma. Thus, following the ritualistic injunctions of the Vedas, persons working for the fruit of their actions take repeated birth and death. (9.21)

I personally take care of both the material and spiritual welfare of those ever-steadfast devotees who always remember and adore Me with single-minded contemplation. (9.22) O Arjuna, even those devotees who worship the deities with faith, they also worship Me, but in an improper way. (9.23) Because I — the Supreme Being — alone am the enjoyer of all sacrificial services and Lord of the universe. But people do not know My true, spiritual nature. Therefore, they fall into the repeated cycles of birth and death. (9.24) Worshippers of the deities go to the deities; worshippers of ancestors go to the ancestors, and worshippers of the ghosts go to the ghosts; but My devotees come to Me and are not born again. (9.25)

The Lord accepts and eats the offering of love

Whosoever offers Me a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water with devotion, I accept and eat the offering of devotion by the pure-hearted. (9.26) O Arjuna, whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer as oblation to the sacred fire, whatever charity you give, whatever austerity you perform, do all that as an offering unto Me. (9.27) You shall become free from the bondage — good

and bad — of Karma by this attitude of complete renunciation (Samnyasa-yoga). Becoming liberated, you shall come to Me. (9.28)

There is no unforgivable sinner

The Self is present equally in all beings. There is no one hateful or dear to Me. But those who worship Me with love and devotion are very close to Me, and I am also very close to them. (9.29) Even if the most sinful person resolves to worship Me with single-minded, loving devotion; such a person must be regarded as a saint because of making the right resolution. (9.30)

There are no unforgivable sins or sinners. The fire of sincere repentance burns all sins.

Such a person soon becomes righteous and attains everlasting peace. Be aware, O Arjuna, that My devotee shall never perish or fall down. (9.31)

The path of devotional love is easier

Anybody — including women, merchants, laborers, and the evil-minded — can attain the supreme abode by just surrendering unto My will with loving devotion, O Arjuna. (9.32) It should then be very easy for holy priests and devout sages to attain the Supreme. Therefore, having obtained this joyless and transitory human life, one should always worship Me with loving devotion. (9.33) Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, worship Me, and bow down to Me. Thus, uniting yourself with Me by setting Me as the supreme goal and the sole refuge, you shall certainly come to Me. (9.34)

CHAPTER 10

10. Manifestation of the absolute

The Supreme Lord said: O Arjuna, listen once again to My supreme word that I shall speak to you, who are very dear to Me, for your welfare. (10.01)

God is the origin of everything

Neither the celestial controllers (Devas), nor the great sages know My origin because I am the origin of all Devas and great sages also. (10.02) One who knows Me as the unborn, the beginningless, and the Supreme Lord of the universe, is considered wise among the mortals and becomes liberated from the bondage of Karma. (10.03) Intelligence, Self-knowledge, non-delusion, forgiveness, truthfulness, control over the mind and senses, tranquility, pleasure, pain, birth, death, fear, fearlessness, nonviolence, calmness, contentment, austerity, charity, fame, ill fame — these diverse qualities in human beings also arise from Me. (10.04-05) The seven great sages from whom all the creatures of the world were born, originated from My potential energy. (10.06)

One who truly understands My manifestations and yogic powers, is united with Me by unswerving devotion. There is no doubt about it. (10.07) I am the origin of all. Everything emanates from

Me. Understanding this, the wise adore Me with love and devotion. (10.08) My devotees remain ever content and delighted. Their minds remain absorbed in Me and their lives surrendered unto Me. They always enlighten each other by talking about Me. (10.09)

God gives spiritual knowledge to His devotees

I give knowledge and understanding of metaphysical science — to those who are ever united with Me and lovingly adore Me — by which they come to Me. (10.10) I, who dwell within their inner psyche as consciousness, destroy the darkness born of ignorance by the shining lamp of spiritual knowledge as an act of compassion for them. (10.11) Arjuna said: You are the Supreme Being, the Supreme Abode, the Supreme Purifier, the Eternal Divine Being, the primal God, the unborn, and the omnipresent. All sages have thus acclaimed You. And now You Yourself tell me that. (10.12-13)

Nobody can know the real nature of Reality

O Krishna, I believe all that You have told me to be true. O Lord, neither the celestial controllers nor the demons fully understand Your real nature. (10.14) O Creator and Lord of all beings, God of all celestial rulers, Supreme person, and Lord of the universe, You alone know Yourself by Yourself. (10.15) Therefore, You alone are able to fully describe Your own divine manifestations by which You exist pervading all the universes. (10.16) How may I know You, O Lord, by constant contemplation? In what form of manifestation am I to think of You, O Lord? (10.17) O Lord, explain to me again, in detail, Your yogic power and glory because I am not satiated by hearing Your nectar-like words. (10.18)

Everything is a manifestation of the Absolute

The Supreme Lord said: O Arjuna, now I shall explain to you My prominent divine manifestations because My manifestations are endless. (10.19) O Arjuna, I am the Spirit abiding in the inner psyche of all beings. I am also the beginning, the middle, and the end of all beings. (10.20) I am the sustainer, I am the radiant sun among the luminaries, I am the supernatural controllers of wind, I am the moon among the stars. (10.21) I am the Vedas, I am the celestial rulers, I am the mind among the senses, I am the consciousness in living beings. (10.22) I am Lord Shiva, I am the god of wealth, I am the god of fire, and the mountains. (10.23) I am the priest and the army general of the celestial controllers, O Arjuna. I am the ocean among the bodies of water. (10.24) I am sage Bhrigu among the great sages; I am the monosyllable cosmic sound, OM , Amin, Allah among the words; I am the silent repetition of mantra (Japa) among the spiritual disciplines; and I am the Himalaya among the mountains. (10.25)

A brief description of divine manifestations

I am the holy fig tree among the trees, and I am all other celestial rulers. (10.26) Know Me as the celestial animal among the animals and the King among men. I am the thunderbolt among weapons, and I am Cupid for procreation. (10.27-28) I am the water god and the manes. I am the controller of death. I am death among the healers, lion among the beasts, and the king of birds among birds. (10.29-30) I am the wind among the purifiers and Lord Rama among the warriors. I am the crocodile among the fishes and the holy Ganga river among the rivers. (10.31)

I am the beginning, the middle, and the end of all creation, O Arjuna. Among knowledge I am knowledge of the supreme Self. I am logic of the logician. (10.32) I am the letter 'A' among the alphabets. I am the dual compound among the compound words. I am the endless time. I am the sustainer of all, and have faces on all sides (or I am omniscient). (10.33) I am the all-devouring death and also the origin of future beings. I am the seven goddesses or guardian angels presiding over the seven qualities: Fame, prosperity, speech, memory, intellect, resolve, and forgiveness. (10.34) I am the Vedic hymns. I am Gayatri mantra among the Vedic mantras. I am November-December among the months, I am the spring among the seasons. (10.35) I am gambling of the cheats, splendor of the splendid, victory of the victorious, resolution of the resolute, and goodness of the good. (10.36)

I am Krishna, Arjuna, sage Vyasa among the sages, and Ushana among the great poets. (10.37) I am the power of rulers, the statesmanship of the seekers of victory, I am silence among the secrets, and the Self-knowledge of the knowledgeable. (10.38) I am the origin of all beings, O Arjuna. There is nothing, animate or inanimate, that can exist without Me. (10.39)

Creation is a small part of the Absolute

There is no end of My divine manifestations, O Arjuna. This is only a brief description by Me of the extent of My divine manifestations. (10.40) Whatever is endowed with glory, brilliance, and power — know that to be a manifestation of a very small fraction of My splendor. (10.41) What is the need for this detailed knowledge, O Arjuna? I continually support the entire universe by a small fraction of My divine power, Maya. (10.42)

CHAPTER 11

11. Vision of the universal form

Arjuna said: My illusion is dispelled by the profound words of wisdom You spoke out of compassion for me about the supreme secret of Eternal Being. (11.01) O Krishna, I have heard from You in detail about the origin and dissolution of beings and Your immutable glory. (11.02)

The vision of God is the ultimate aim of a seeker

O Lord, You are as You have said, yet I wish to see Your divine cosmic form, O Supreme Being. (11.03) O Lord, if You think it is possible for me to see Your universal form, then, O Lord of the yogis, show me Your transcendental form. (11.04) The Supreme Lord said: O Arjuna, behold My hundreds and thousands of multifarious divine forms of different colors and shapes. Behold all the celestial beings and many wonders never seen before. Also behold the entire creation — animate, inanimate, and whatever else you would like to see — all at one place in My body. (11.05-07) But you are not able to see Me with your physical eye; therefore, I give you the divine eye to see My majestic power and glory. (11.08)

Lord Krishna shows His cosmic form

Sanjaya said: O King, having said this, Lord Krishna, the great Lord of the mystic power of yoga, revealed His supreme majestic form to Arjuna. (11.09) Arjuna saw the Universal Form of the Lord with many mouths and eyes, and many marvelous visions with numerous divine ornaments, holding many divine weapons, wearing divine garlands and apparel, anointed with celestial perfumes and ointments, full of all wonders — the limitless God with faces on all sides. (11.10-11) If the splendor of thousands of suns were to blaze forth all at once in the sky, even that would not resemble the splendor of that exalted being. (11.12) Arjuna saw the entire universe, divided in many ways, but standing as all in One in the transcendental body of Krishna, the Lord of celestial rulers. (11.13)

One may not be prepared or qualified to see God

Upon seeing the cosmic form of the Lord, Arjuna was filled with wonder; and his hairs standing on end, bowed his head to the Lord and prayed with folded hands. (11.14) Arjuna said: O Lord, I see in Your body all supernatural controllers and multitudes of beings, all sages, celestial serpents, Lord Shiva, as well as Lord Brahma seated on the lotus. (11.15) O Lord of the universe, I see You everywhere with infinite forms, with many arms, stomachs, faces, and eyes. O Universal Form, I see neither your beginning nor the middle nor the end. (11.16) I see You with crown, club, discus, and massive radiance, difficult to behold, shining all around like the immeasurable brilliance and blazing fire of the sun. (11.17)

I believe You are the Supreme Being to be realized. You are the ultimate resort of the universe. You are the Eternal Being and protector of the eternal order (Dharma). (11.18) I see You with infinite power, without beginning, middle, or end; with many arms; with the sun and the moon as Your eyes; with Your mouth as a blazing fire, scorching all the universe with Your radiance. (11.19) O Lord, the entire space between heaven and earth in all directions is pervaded by You. Seeing Your marvelous and terrible form, the three worlds are trembling with fear. (11.20) Hosts of supernatural rulers

enter into You. Some with folded hands sing Your names and glories in fear. A multitude of perfected beings hail and adore You with abundant praises. (11.21) All the celestial beings amazingly gaze at You. Seeing your infinite form with many mouths, eyes, arms, thighs, feet, stomachs, and many fearful tusks; the worlds are trembling with fear, and so do I, O mighty Lord. (11.22-23)

Arjuna is frightened to see the Cosmic form

Seeing Your effulgent and colorful form touching the sky; Your mouth wide open and large shining eyes; I am frightened and find neither peace nor courage, O Krishna. (11.24) Seeing Your mouths with fearful tusks, glowing like fires of cosmic dissolution, I lose my sense of direction and find no comfort. Have mercy on me, O Lord of celestial rulers, refuge of the universe! (11.25) All my cousin brothers, along with the hosts of other kings and warriors of the other side, together with chief warriors on our side, are also quickly entering into Your fearful mouths with terrible tusks. Some are seen caught in between the tusks with their heads crushed. (11.26-27) These warriors of the mortal world are entering Your blazing mouths as many torrents of the rivers enter into the ocean. (11.28) All these people are rapidly rushing into Your mouths for destruction as moths rush with great speed into the blazing flame for destruction. (11.29) You are licking up all the worlds with Your flaming mouths, swallowing them from all sides. Your powerful radiance is filling the entire universe with effulgence and burning it, O Krishna. (11.30) Tell me who You are in such a fierce form? My salutations to You, O best of all celestial rulers, be merciful! I wish to understand You, O primal Being, because I do not know Your mission. (11.31)

We are only a divine instrument

The Supreme Lord said: I am death, the mighty destroyer of the world. I have come here to destroy all these people. Even without your participation in the war, all the warriors standing arrayed in the opposing armies shall cease to exist. (11.32) Therefore get up and attain glory. Conquer your enemies, and enjoy a prosperous kingdom. All these warriors have already been destroyed by Me. You be a mere My instrument, O Arjuna. (11.33)

This is My battle, not yours. I use you, O Arjuna, only as an instrument. I do everything through your body. One must remember at all times that all battles are His, not ours. The will and power of God do everything.

Kill all these great warriors who are already killed by Me. Do not fear. You *will certainly conquer the enemies* in the battle; therefore, fight! (11.34)

Arjuna's prayers to the Cosmic form

Sanjaya said: Having heard these words of Krishna, the crowned Arjuna, trembling with folded hands, prostrated with fear

and spoke to Krishna in a choked voice. (11.35) Arjuna said: Rightly, O Krishna, the world delights and rejoices in glorifying You. Terrified demons flee in all directions. The hosts of perfected ones bow to You in adoration. (11.36) Why should they not — O great soul — bow to You, the original creator who is even greater than Brahma, the creator of material worlds? O infinite Lord, O God of all celestial rulers, O abode of the universe, You are both Sat (eternal) and Asat (temporal), and the Supreme Being that is beyond both Sat and Asat. (11.37)

You are the primal God, the most ancient Person. You are the ultimate resort of all the universe. You are the knower, the object of knowledge, and the supreme abode. The entire universe is pervaded by You, O Lord of the infinite form. (11.38) You are the controller of death, the fire, the wind, the water god, the moon god, and Brahma, the creator, as well as the father of Brahma. Salutations to You a thousand times, and again and again salutations to You. (11.39) My salutations to You from front and from behind. O Lord, my obeisance to You from all sides. You are infinite valor and boundless might. You pervade everything; therefore, You are everywhere and in everything. (11.40)

Considering You merely as a friend, and not knowing Your greatness, I have inadvertently addressed You as O Krishna, O Yadava, O friend, etc., merely out of affection or carelessness. (11.41) In whatever way I may have insulted You in jokes while playing, reposing in bed, sitting, or at meals; when alone or in front of others, O Krishna, the immeasurable One, I implore You for forgiveness. (11.42) You are the father of this animate and inanimate world, and the greatest Guru to be worshipped. No one is even equal to You in the three worlds; how can there be one greater than You, O Being of incomparable glory? (11.43)

Therefore, O adorable Lord, I seek Your mercy by bowing down and prostrating my body before You. Bear with me as a father to his son, as a friend to a friend, and as a husband to his wife, O Lord. (11.44) I am delighted by beholding that which has never been seen before, and yet my mind is tormented with fear. Therefore, O God of celestial rulers, the refuge of the universe, have mercy on me and show me Your four-armed form. (11.45)

One may see God in any form

I wish to see You with a crown, holding mace and discus in Your hand. Therefore, O Lord, with thousand arms and universal form, please appear in the four-armed form. (11.46) The Supreme Lord said: O Arjuna, being pleased with you I have shown you — through My own yogic powers — this particular, supreme, shining, universal, infinite, and primal form of Mine that has never been seen before by anyone other than you. (11.47) O Arjuna, neither

by study of the Vedas, nor by sacrifice, nor by charity, nor by rituals, nor by severe austerities, can I be seen in this cosmic form by anyone other than you in this human world. (11.48)

Do not be perturbed and confused by seeing such a terrible form of Mine as this. With fearless and cheerful mind, now behold My four-armed form. (11.49) Sanjaya said: After speaking like this to Arjuna, Lord Krishna revealed His four-armed form. And then assuming His pleasant human form, Lord Krishna, the Great One, consoled Arjuna who was terrified. (11.50) Arjuna said: O Krishna, seeing this lovely human form of Yours, I have now become tranquil and I am normal again. (11.51)

God can be seen by devotional love

The Supreme Lord said: This (four-armed) form of Mine that you have seen is very difficult, indeed, to see. Even celestial controllers are ever longing to see this form. (11.52) This four-armed form of Mine that you have just seen cannot be seen even by study of the Vedas, or by austerity, or by acts of charity, or by the performance of rituals. (11.53) However, through single-minded devotion alone, I can be seen in this form, can be known in essence, and also can be reached, O Arjuna. (11.54) One who dedicates all works to Me, and to whom I am the supreme goal, who is my devotee, who has no attachment, and is free from enmity towards any being — attains Me, O Arjuna. (11.55)

CHAPTER 12

12. Path of devotion

Worship a personal or impersonal God?

Arjuna said: Which of these has the best knowledge of yoga — those ever-steadfast devotees who worship You as Krishna, Your personal aspect, or those who worship Your impersonal aspect, the Eternal Being? (12.01) The Supreme Lord said: I consider the best yogis to be those ever-steadfast devotees who worship with supreme faith by fixing their mind on Me as their personal god. (12.02) They also attain Me who worship the unchangeable, the inexplicable, the invisible, the omnipresent, the inconceivable, the unchanging, and the immovable Eternal Being; restraining all the senses, even minded under all circumstances, and engaged in the welfare of all creatures. (12.03-04)

Reasons for worshipping a personal God

Self-realization is more difficult for those who fix their mind on the impersonal, unmanifest, Eternal Being because comprehension of the unmanifest by human beings is attained with difficulty. (12.05) But for those who worship Me with unswerving devotion as their personal god, offer all actions to Me, intent on Me as the Supreme, and meditate on Me; I swiftly become their savior — from

the world that is the ocean of death and transmigration — whose thoughts are set on My personal form, O Arjuna. (12.06-07)

The four paths to God

Therefore, focus your mind on Me, and let your intellect dwell upon Me through meditation and contemplation. Thereafter, you shall certainly attain Me. (12.08) If you are unable to focus your mind steadily on Me, then long to attain Me, O Arjuna, by practice of any other spiritual discipline that suits you. (12.09) If you are unable even to do any spiritual discipline, then be intent on performing all your duty for Me. You shall attain perfection just by working for Me as an instrument, just to serve and please Me, without selfish motives. (12.10) If you are unable to work for Me, then just surrender unto My will and renounce the attachment to and anxiety for the fruits of all work with subdued mind — by learning to accept all results, as God's grace. (12.11)

Karma-yoga is the best Path

The knowledge of scriptures is better than mere ritualistic practice; meditation is better than scriptural knowledge; renunciation of attachment to the fruits of all work is better than meditation; peace immediately follows renunciation. (See more on renunciation in 18.02, 18.09) (12.12)

The attributes of a devotee

One who does not hate any creature, who is friendly and compassionate, free from the notion of "I" and "my", even-minded in pain and pleasure, forgiving; and the yogi who is ever content, who has subdued the mind, whose resolve is firm, whose mind and intellect are engaged in dwelling upon Me, who is devoted to Me — is dear to Me. (12.13-14) The one by whom others are not agitated and who is not agitated by others, who is free from joy, envy, fear, and anxiety is also dear to Me. (12.15) One who is desireless, pure, wise, impartial, and free from anxiety; who has renounced the doership in all undertakings—such a devotee is dear to Me. (12.16) One who neither rejoices nor grieves, neither likes nor dislikes, who has renounced both the good and the evil, and is full of devotion—is dear to Me. (12.17) The one who remains the same towards friend or foe, in honor or disgrace, in heat or cold, in pleasure or pain; who is free from attachment; who is indifferent to censure or praise, quiet, content with whatever one has, unattached to a place, a country, or a house; calm, and full of devotion — that person is dear to Me. (12.18-19)

One should sincerely try to develop divine qualities

But those faithful devotees are very dear to Me who set Me as their supreme goal and follow—or just sincerely try to develop—the above mentioned nectar of moral values. (12.20)

CHAPTER 13

13. Creation and the creator

The theory of creation

The Supreme Lord said: O Arjuna, this physical body, a miniature universe, may be called the creation. One who knows the creation is called the creator by the seers of truth. (13.01) O Arjuna, know Me to be the creator of all the creation. The true understanding of both the creator and the creation is considered by Me to be the spiritual or metaphysical knowledge. (13.02) What the creation is, what it's like, what its transformations are, where its source is, who that creator is, and what His powers are — hear all these from Me in brief. (13.03) The seers have separately described the creation and the creator in different ways in the Vedic hymns, and also in the conclusive and convincing verses of the Brahma-Sutra. (13.04) The primary material Nature, cosmic intellect, "I" consciousness or ego, five basic elements, ten organs, mind, five sense objects; and desire, hatred, pleasure, pain, the physical body, consciousness, and resolve — thus the entire field has been briefly described with its transformations. (13.05-06)

The fourfold noble truth as means of Nirvana

Humility, modesty, nonviolence, forgiveness, honesty, service to guru, purity of thought, word, and deed, steadfastness, self-control; and aversion towards sense objects, absence of ego; constant reflection on pain and suffering inherent in birth, old age, disease, and death; (13.07-08) detached attachment with family members, home, etc.; unfailing calmness upon attainment of the desirable and the undesirable; and unswerving devotion to Me through single-minded contemplation, taste for solitude, distaste for social gatherings and gossips; steadfastness in acquiring the knowledge of Eternal Being, and seeing the omnipresent Supreme Being everywhere — this is said to be knowledge. That which is contrary to this is ignorance. (13.09-11)

God can be described by parables only

I shall fully describe the object of knowledge — knowing which one attains immortality. The beginningless Supreme Being is said to be neither eternal (Sat) nor temporal (Asat). (13.12) The Eternal Being has His hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth, and ears everywhere, because He is all-pervading and omnipresent. (13.13) He is the perceiver of all sense objects without the physical sense organs; unattached, and yet the sustainer of all; devoid of three modes of material Nature, and yet the enjoyer of the modes of material Nature by becoming a living entity. (13.14) He is inside as well as outside all beings, animate and inanimate. He is incomprehensible because of His subtlety. And because of His omnipresence, He is very near, residing in one's inner psyche, as well as far away in His Supreme Abode. (13.15) He is undivided, and yet appears to exist as if divided in beings. He, the object of knowledge,

appears as: Brahma, the creator; Vishnu, the sustainer; and Shiva, the destroyer of all beings. (13.16)

The Supreme Person is the source of all light. He is said to be beyond darkness of ignorance. He is the Self-knowledge, the object of Self-knowledge, and seated in the inner psyche as consciousness of all beings. He is to be realized by Self-knowledge. (13.17) Thus, the creation as well as the knowledge and the object of knowledge have been briefly described by Me. Understanding this, My devotee attains the supreme abode. (13.18)

A description of the supreme spirit, spirit, and jiva

Know that both the material Nature and the Spiritual Being are beginningless. All manifestations and three states of mind and matter, called modes or Gunas, are born of Prakriti. Prakriti is said to be the cause of production of the physical body and the eleven organs of perception and action. Purusha (Consciousness, Spirit) is said to be the cause of experiencing pleasure and pain. (13.19-20) Purusha enjoys three modes of material Nature (Prakriti) by associating with Prakriti. Attachment to the Gunas due to ignorance caused by previous Karma is the cause of birth of living entity (jiva) in good and evil wombs. (13.21)

Eternal Being (God, Spirit) in the body is also called the witness, the guide, the supporter, the enjoyer, the great Lord, and also the Supreme Self. (13.22) They who truly understand Spiritual Being (Purusha) and the material Nature (Prakriti) with its three modes (Gunas) are not born again, regardless of their way of life. (13.23) Some perceive the supersoul in their inner psyche through mind and intellect that have been purified either by meditation or by metaphysical knowledge or by Karma-yoga. (13.24)

The faith alone can lead to Nirvana

Others, however, do not know the yoga of meditation, knowledge, and work; but they perform deity worship with faith, as mentioned in the scriptures by the saints and sages. They also transcend death by virtue of their firm faith in what they have heard. (13.25) Whatever is born, animate or inanimate, know them to be born from the union of the matter and Spirit, O Arjuna. (13.26)

The one who sees the same eternal Supreme Lord dwelling as Spirit equally within all mortal beings, truly sees. (13.27) Because of beholding one and the same Lord existing equally in every being, one does not injure anybody and thereupon attains the supreme abode. (13.28) One who perceives that all works are done by the powers (Gunas) of material Nature (Prakriti) alone, and thus does not consider oneself as the doer, that person truly understands. (13.29) The moment one discovers the diverse variety of beings and their ideas abiding in the Source and coming out from Him alone, one attains the Supreme Being. (13.30)

Attributes of the spirit

Because of being beginningless and unaffectable by the three modes of material Nature, the eternal supersoul — even though dwelling in the body as a living entity — neither does anything nor becomes tainted, O Arjuna. (13.31) Just as the all-pervading space is not tainted because of its subtlety; similarly, Spirit, abiding in all bodies, is not tainted. (13.32) Just as one sun illuminates the entire world; similarly, Eternal Being illumines or gives life to the entire creation, O Arjuna. (13.33)

They attain the Supreme, who perceive the difference between body and spirit with the eye of Self-knowledge, and know the techniques — by using any one of the five paths: Selfless service, Knowledge, Devotion, Meditation, and Surrender — of liberation of the living entity (Jiva) from the trap of divine illusory energy (Maya). (13.34)

CHAPTER 14

14. Three modes (Gunas) of nature

The Supreme Lord said: I shall further explain to you that supreme knowledge, the best of all knowledge, knowing which all the sages have attained supreme perfection after this life. (14.01) They who have taken refuge in this spiritual knowledge attain unity with Me and are neither born at the time of creation, nor afflicted at the time of dissolution. (14.02)

Beings are born from the union of spirit and matter

My material Nature is the womb of creation wherein I place the seed of consciousness from which all beings are born, O Arjuna. (14.03) Whatever forms are produced in all different wombs, O Arjuna, the material Nature is their body-giving mother; and I am the life-giving father. (14.04)

How three modes of material nature bind us

Sattva or goodness; Rajas or passion, activity; and Tamas or ignorance, inertia — these three modes (Ropes, Gunas) of material Nature (Prakriti) fetter the eternal individual soul to the body, O Arjuna. (14.05) Of these, the mode of goodness is illuminating and good because it is pure. It fetters the living entity by attachment to happiness and knowledge, O sinless Arjuna. (14.06) Know that the mode of passion is characterized by intense craving and is the source of desire and attachment. It binds the living entity by attachment to the fruits of work. (14.07) Know, O Arjuna, that the mode of ignorance — the deluder of living entity — is born of inertia. It binds the living entity by carelessness, laziness, and excessive sleep. (14.08) O Arjuna, the mode of goodness attaches one to happiness (of learning and knowing the Eternal Being); the mode of passion attaches to intense action; and the mode of ignorance attaches to inaction, laziness by covering Self-knowledge. (14.09)

Characteristics of three modes of nature

Goodness prevails by suppressing passion and ignorance; passion prevails by suppressing goodness and ignorance; and ignorance prevails by suppressing goodness and passion, O Arjuna. (14.10) When the light of Self-knowledge illuminates all the senses in the body, then it should be known that goodness is predominant. (14.11) O Arjuna, when passion is predominant, greed, activity, undertaking of selfish work, restlessness, excitement, etc. arise. (14.12) O Arjuna, when inertia is predominant, ignorance, inactivity, carelessness, delusion, etc. arise. (14.13)

Three modes are also the vehicles of transmigration

One who dies when goodness dominates goes to heaven — the pure world of knowers of the Supreme. (14.14) One who dies when passion dominates is reborn attached to action or the utilitarian type. One who dies in ignorance is reborn as a lower creature. (14.15) The fruit of good action is said to be beneficial and pure; the fruit of passionate action is pain; and the fruit of ignorant action is laziness. (14.16) Self-knowledge arises from the mode of goodness; greed arises from the mode of passion; and negligence, delusion, and slowness of mind arise from the mode of ignorance. (14.17) They who are established in goodness go to heaven; passionate persons are reborn in the mortal world; and the ignorant, abiding in the lowest mode of ignorance, go to lower planets or hell (or take birth as lower creatures). (14.18)

Attain Nirvana after rising above three modes

When visionaries perceive no doer other than the three modes of material Nature and know the Supreme, which is above and beyond these modes, then they attain salvation (Mukti). (14.19) When one rises above the three modes of material Nature that originate in the body, one attains immortality or salvation (Mukti) and is freed from the pains of birth, old age, and death. (14.20)

The process of rising above three modes

Arjuna said: What are the marks of those who have transcended the three modes of material Nature, and what is their conduct? How does one transcend these three modes of material Nature, O Lord Krishna? (14.21) The Supreme Lord said: One is said to have transcended the modes of material Nature who neither hates the presence of enlightenment, activity, and delusion; nor desires for them when they are absent; who remains like a witness without being affected by the modes of material Nature; who stays firmly attached to the Lord without wavering — thinking that only the modes of material Nature are operating. (14.22-23) And one who depends on the Lord and is indifferent to pain and pleasure; to whom a clod, a stone, and gold are alike; to whom the dear and the unfriendly are alike; who is of firm mind; who is calm in censure

and in praise, and indifferent to honor and disgrace; who is impartial to friend and foe; and who has given up the sense of doership and ownership. (14.24-25)

Bonds of three modes can be cut by devotional love

One who offers service to Me with love and unswerving devotion, rises above three modes of material Nature and becomes fit for Nirvana. (14.26) Because I am the basis of the immortal Eternal Being, of everlasting order (Dharma), and of the absolute bliss. (14.27)

CHAPTER 15

15. The supreme being

Creation is like a tree created by of Maya

The Supreme Lord said: Sages speak of the eternal banyan tree that has its origin (or root) above in the Supreme Being and branches below in the cosmos, and whose leaves are the Vedic hymns. One who understands this tree is a knower of the Vedas. (15.01) The branches of this cosmic tree of Maya (Illusion) spread all over the cosmos. The tree is nourished by three modes of material Nature; sense pleasures are its sprouts; and its roots of ego, attachment and desire stretch below in the human world, causing Karmic bondage. (15.02)

Cut the tree of attachment to attain salvation

The real form of this tree is not perceptible here on earth, nor is its beginning, end, or existence. Having cut the firm roots — the ego and desires — of this tree by the mighty ax of Self-knowledge and detachment; thus thinking: "I take refuge in that very primal person from whom this primal manifestation comes forth", seek that supreme abode from where one does not come back to the mortal world again. (15.03-04) The wise reach that eternal goal, who are free from pride and delusion, who have conquered the evil of attachment, who constantly dwell in the Supreme Self with all desires completely stilled, and who are free from dualities of pleasure and pain. (15.05) The sun does not illumine My supreme abode, nor does the moon, nor the fire. Having reached there people attain permanent liberation (Mukti) and do not come back to this temporal world again. (15.06)

The embodied soul is the enjoyer

The eternal individual soul in the body of living beings is, indeed, My integral part. It associates with the six sensory faculties of perception — including the mind — and activates them. (15.07) Just as the air takes aroma away from the flower; similarly, the individual soul takes the six sensory faculties from the physical body it casts off during death to the new physical body it acquires in reincarnation by the power of Karma. (15.08) The living entity (Jiva)

enjoys sense pleasures using six sensory faculties of hearing, touch, sight, taste, smell, and mind. The ignorant cannot perceive Jiva departing from the body, nor staying in the body and enjoying sense pleasures by associating with the modes of material Nature. But those who have the eye of Self-knowledge can see it. (15.09-10) The yogis, striving for perfection, behold the living entity (Jiva) abiding in their inner psyche as consciousness, but the ignorant and those whose inner psyche is not pure, even though striving, do not perceive Him. (15.11)

Spirit is the essence of everything

Know that light energy to be Mine that comes from the sun and illumines the whole world and is in the moon and in fire. (15.12)

NOTE: The light of the sun is a reflection of His radiance (RV 10.07.03). The knowers of the Supreme Being visualize everywhere — in themselves, in every human being, and in the whole universe — that supreme cluster of light which is the source of the visible world.

Entering the earth, I support all beings with My energy. Becoming the sap-giving moon, I nourish all the plants. (15.13) Becoming the digestive fire, I remain in the body of all living beings. Uniting with vital life forces, I digest all types of food. (15.14) And I am seated in the inner psyche of all beings. Memory, Self-knowledge, and removal of doubts and wrong notions (about the Eternal Being by reasoning or in trance (Samadhi)) come from Me. I am to be known by the study of all the Vedas. I am, indeed, the author of the Vedanta and the knower of the Vedas. (15.15)

Supreme spirit, spirit and the created beings

There are two entities in the cosmos: The temporal Divine Beings and the unchangeable Eternal Being. All created beings are subject to change, but the Eternal Being does not change. (15.16) The Supreme Being is beyond both the Temporal Divine Beings and the Eternal Being. He is also called the Absolute, Reality, God, the Source, who sustains both the Temporal and the Eternal by pervading everything. (15.17) Because I am beyond both the Temporal and the Eternal, therefore I am known in this world and in the Vedas as the Supreme Being. (15.18) The wise, who truly understand Me as the Supreme Being, know everything and worship Me wholeheartedly, O Arjuna. (15.19) Thus, I have explained this most secret science of Self-knowledge, O sinless Arjuna. Having understood this, one becomes enlightened; one's all duties are accomplished; and the goal of human life is achieved, O Arjuna. (15.20)

CHAPTER 16

16. Divine and the demonic qualities

A list of divine qualities to be cultivated

The Supreme Lord said: Fearlessness, purity of the inner psyche, perseverance in the yoga of Self-knowledge, charity, sense-restraint, sacrifice, study of the scriptures, austerity, honesty; non-violence, truthfulness, absence of anger, renunciation, calmness, abstinence from malicious talk, compassion for all creatures, freedom from greed, gentleness, modesty, absence of fickleness, splendor, forgiveness, fortitude, cleanliness, absence of malice, and absence of pride — these are the (twenty-six) qualities of those endowed with divine virtues, O Arjuna. (16.01-03)

A list of demonic qualities to be given up

O Arjuna, the marks of those who are born with demonic qualities are: Hypocrisy, arrogance, pride, anger, harshness, and ignorance. (16.04) Divine qualities lead to salvation (Moksha); the demonic qualities are said to be for bondage. Do not grieve, O Arjuna; you are born with divine qualities. (16.05)

There are only two types of human beings

Basically, there are only two types of human beings in this world: The divine, and the demonic. The divine has been described at length. Now hear from Me about the demonic, O Arjuna. (16.06) Persons of demonic nature do not know what to do and what not to do. They have neither purity nor good conduct nor truthfulness. (16.07) They say that the world is unreal, without a substratum, without God, and without an order. The world is caused by sexual union of man and woman alone and nothing else. (16.08) Adhering to this wrong, atheistic view, these degraded souls — with small intellect and cruel deeds — are born as enemies for the destruction of the world. (16.09) Filled with insatiable desires, hypocrisy, pride, and arrogance; holding wrong views due to delusion; they act with impure motives, (16.10) obsessed with endless anxiety lasting until death, considering sense gratification their highest aim, and convinced that sense pleasure is everything; (16.11)

Bound by hundreds of ties of desire and enslaved by lust and anger, they strive to obtain wealth by unlawful means to fulfill sensual pleasures. They think: (16.12) This has been gained by me today; I shall fulfill this desire; I have this much wealth and will have more wealth in the future; (16.13) that enemy has been slain by me, and I shall slay others also. I am the lord. I am the enjoyer. I am successful, powerful, and happy; (16.14)

I am rich and born in a noble family. Who is equal to me? I shall perform sacrifice, I shall give charity, and I shall rejoice. (16.15) Thus deluded by ignorance, bewildered by many fancies, entangled in the net of delusion, addicted to the enjoyment of sensual pleasures, they fall into a foul hell. (16.16) Self-conceited, stubborn, filled with pride and intoxication of wealth, they perform sacrifice, charity, etc. only in name for show, and not according to

scriptural injunction. (16.17) These malicious people cling to egoism, power, arrogance, lust, anger, greed, hatred; and they deny My presence in their own body and in others' bodies. (16.18)

Suffering is the destiny of the ignorant

I hurl these haters, cruel, sinful, and mean people into the cycles of rebirth in the womb of demons again and again. (16.19) O Arjuna, entering the wombs of demons, birth after birth, the deluded ones sink to the lowest hell without ever attaining Me. (16.20)

Lust, anger, and greed are the three gates to hell

Lust, anger, and greed are the three gates of hell leading to the bondage of the individual. Therefore, one must learn to give up these three. (16.21) One who is liberated from these three gates of hell, O Arjuna, does what is best and consequently attains the supreme abode. (16.22)

One must follow the scripture

One who acts under the influence of one's desires, disobeying scriptural injunctions, neither attains perfection nor happiness nor the supreme abode. (16.23) Therefore, let the scripture be your authority in determining what should be done and what should not be done. You should perform your duty following the scriptural injunction. (16.24)

CHAPTER 17

17. Threefold faith

Arjuna said: What is the mode of devotion of those who perform spiritual practices with faith, but without following the scriptural injunctions, O Krishna? Is it in the mode of goodness, passion, or ignorance? (17.01)

Three types of faith

The Supreme Lord said: The natural faith of embodied beings is of three kinds: Goodness, passion, and ignorance. Now hear about these from Me. (17.02) O Arjuna, the faith of each is in accordance with one's own natural disposition governed by Karmic impressions. One is known by one's faith. One can become whatever one wants to be — if one constantly contemplates the object of desire with faith. (17.03) Persons in the mode of goodness worship celestial controllers; those in the mode of passion worship supernatural rulers and demons; and those in the mode of ignorance worship ghosts and spirits. (17.04) Ignorant persons of demonic nature are those who practice severe austerities without following the prescription of the scriptures, who are full of hypocrisy and egotism, who are impelled by the force of desire and attachment, and who senselessly torture the elements in their body and also Me who dwells within the body. (17.05-06)

Three types of food

The food preferred by all of us is also of three types. So are the sacrifice, austerity, and charity. Now hear the distinction between

them. (17.07) The foods that promote longevity, virtue, strength, health, happiness, and joy are juicy, smooth, substantial, and nutritious. Such foods are liked by persons in the mode of goodness. (17.08) People in the mode of passion like foods that are very bitter, sour, salty, hot, pungent, dry, and burning; and cause pain, grief, and disease. (17.09) People in the mode of ignorance like foods that are stale, tasteless, putrid, rotten, refuse, impure, such as meat and alcohol. (17.10)

Three types of sacrifices

Selfless service — enjoined by the scriptures and performed without a desire for the fruit, with a firm belief and conviction that it is one's duty — is in the mode of goodness. (17.11) Selfless service that is performed only for show and aiming for fruit — is in the mode of passion, O Arjuna. (17.12) Selfless service that is performed without following the scripture, in which no food is distributed, which is devoid of mantra, faith, and gift, is said to be in the mode of ignorance. (17.13)

Austerity of thought, word, and deed

The worship of celestial controllers, the priest, the guru, and the wise; purity, honesty, celibacy, and nonviolence — these are said to be austerity of deed. (17.14) Speech that is non-offensive, truthful, pleasant, beneficial, and is used for the regular study of scriptures is called the austerity of word. (17.15) Serenity of mind, gentleness, calmness, self-control, and purity of thought — these are called austerity of thought. (17.16)

Three types of austerity

The above mentioned threefold austerity — of thought, word, and deed — practiced by yogis with supreme faith, without a desire for the fruit, is said to be in the mode of goodness. (17.17) Austerity that is performed for gaining respect, honor, reverence, and for the sake of show, yielding an uncertain and temporary result, is said to be in the mode of passion. (17.18) Austerity performed with foolish stubbornness or with self-torture or for harming others, is said to be in the mode of ignorance. (17.19)

Three types of charity

Charity that is given at the right place and time as a matter of duty to a deserving candidate who does nothing in return, is considered to be in the mode of goodness. (17.20) Charity that is given unwillingly, or to get something in return, or to gain some fruit, is said to be in the mode of passion. (17.21) Charity that is given at a wrong place and time to unworthy persons, or without paying respect to the receiver or with ridicule, is said to be in the mode of ignorance. (17.22)

Threefold name of God

'OM TAT SAT' is said to be the threefold name of God in Sanskrit. Persons with good qualities, the Vedas, and selfless service

were created by God in the ancient time. (17.23) Therefore, acts of sacrifice, charity, and austerity prescribed in the scriptures are always commenced by uttering 'OM' by the knowers of the Supreme Being. (17.24) Various types of sacrifice, charity, and austerity are performed by the seekers of salvation by uttering 'TAT' (or He is all) without seeking a reward. (17.25) The word 'SAT' is used in the sense of Reality and goodness. The word 'SAT' is also used for an auspicious act, O Arjuna. (17.26) Faith in sacrifice, charity, and austerity is also called 'SAT'. Selfless service for the sake of the Supreme is, in truth, termed as 'SAT'. (17.27) Whatever is done without faith — whether it is sacrifice, charity, austerity, or any other act — is called 'ASAT'. It has no value here or hereafter, O Arjuna. (17.28)

CHAPTER 18

18. Attaining liberation by giving up ego

Arjuna said: I wish to know the nature of renunciation (Samnyasa) and sacrifice (Tyaga) and the difference between the two, O Lord Krishna. (18.01)

Definition of renunciation and sacrifice

The Supreme Lord said: The sages call renunciation the complete renunciation of work for any personal profit. The wise define sacrifice as the sacrifice of, and the freedom from, attachment to the fruits of all work. (18.02) Some philosophers say that all work is full of faults and should be given up, while others say that acts of sacrifice, charity, and austerity should not be abandoned. (18.03)

O Arjuna, listen to My conclusion about sacrifice. Sacrifice is said to be of three types. (18.04) Acts of service, charity, and austerity should not be abandoned, but should be performed, because service, charity, and austerity are the purifiers of the wise. (18.05) Even these obligatory works should be performed without attachment to the fruits. This is My definite supreme advice, O Arjuna. (18.06)

Three types of sacrifice

Giving up one's duty is not proper. The abandonment of obligatory work is due to delusion and is declared to be in the mode of ignorance. (18.07) One who abandons duty merely because it is difficult or because of fear of bodily affliction, does not get the benefits of sacrifice by performing such a sacrifice in the mode of passion. (18.08) Obligatory work performed as duty, renouncing attachment to the fruit, is alone to be regarded as sacrifice in the mode of goodness, O Arjuna. (18.09) One who neither hates a disagreeable work, nor is attached to an agreeable work, is considered a sacrificer (Tyagi), imbued with the mode of goodness, intelligent, and free from all doubts about the Supreme Being. (18.10) Human beings cannot completely abstain from work. Therefore,

one who completely renounces attachment to the fruits of all work is considered a Tyagi. (18.11) The threefold fruit of works — desirable, undesirable, and mixed — accrues after death to the one who is not a Tyagi, but never to a Tyagi. (18.12)

Five causes of an action

Learn from Me, O Arjuna, the five causes, as described in the Samkhya doctrine, for the accomplishment of all actions. They are: the physical body, the seat of Karma; the modes of material Nature, the doer; the eleven organs of perception and action, the instruments; various life forces; and the fifth is one's fate. (18.13-14) These are the five causes of whatever action, whether right or wrong, one performs by thought, word and deed. (18.15) Therefore, the ignorant, who consider one's body or the soul as the sole agent, do not understand due to imperfect knowledge. (18.16) One who is free from the notion of doership and whose intellect is not polluted by the desire to reap the fruit — even after slaying all these people — neither slays nor is bound by the act of killing. (18.17) The subject, the object, and the knowledge of the object are the threefold driving force (or impetus) to an action. The eleven organs of perception and action, the act, and the modes of Nature are the three components of action. (18.18)

Three types of spiritual knowledge

Self-knowledge, action, and agent are said to be of three types, according to the Guna theory. Hear duly about these also. (18.19) The knowledge by which one sees a single immutable Reality in all beings as undivided in the divided, such knowledge is in the mode of goodness. (18.20) The knowledge by which one sees different realities of various types among all beings as separate from one another; such knowledge is in the mode of passion. (18.21) The irrational, baseless, and worthless knowledge by which one clings to one single effect, such as the body, as if it is everything, such knowledge is declared to be in the mode of darkness or ignorance (18.22)

Three types of action

Obligatory duty, performed without likes and dislikes and without selfish motives and attachment to enjoy the fruit, is said to be in the mode of goodness. (18.23) Action performed with ego, with selfish motives, and with too much effort, is in the mode of passion. (18.24) Action that is undertaken because of delusion, disregarding consequences, loss, injury to others, as well as one's own ability, is said to be in the mode of ignorance. (18.25)

Three types of person

A person who is free from attachment, is non-egotistic, endowed with resolve and enthusiasm, and unperturbed in success or failure, is called good. (18.26) A person who is impassioned, who desires the fruits of work, who is greedy, violent, impure, and

gets affected by joy and sorrow, is called passionate. (18.27) A person who is undisciplined, vulgar, stubborn, wicked, malicious, lazy, depressed, and procrastinating, is called ignorant. (18.28)

Three types of intellect

Now hear Me explain fully and separately, O Arjuna, the threefold division of intellect and resolve, based on modes of material Nature. (18.29) O Arjuna, that intellect is in the mode of goodness which understands the path of work and the path of renunciation, right and wrong action, fear and fearlessness, bondage and liberation. (18.30) That intellect is in the mode of passion which cannot distinguish between righteousness and unrighteousness, and right and wrong action, O Arjuna. (18.31) That intellect is in the mode of ignorance which, when covered by ignorance, accepts unrighteousness as righteousness and thinks everything to be that which it is not, O Arjuna. (18.32)

Three types of resolve, four goals of human life

That resolve is in the mode of goodness by which one manipulates the functions of the mind, Prana (bioimpulses, life forces) and senses for God-realization only, O Arjuna. (18.33) That resolve is in the mode of passion by which one, craving for the fruits of work, clings to duty, earning wealth, and pleasure with great attachment. (18.34) That resolve is in the mode of ignorance by which a dull person does not give up sleep, fear, grief, despair, and carelessness, O Arjuna. (18.35)

Three types of pleasure

And now hear from Me, O Arjuna, about the threefold pleasure. The pleasure that one enjoys from spiritual practice results in cessation of all sorrows. (18.36) The pleasure that appears as poison in the beginning, but is like nectar in the end, comes by the grace of Self-knowledge and is in the mode of goodness. (18.37) Sensual pleasures that appear as nectars in the beginning, but become poison in the end, are in the mode of passion. (18.38) Pleasure that confuses a person in the beginning and in the end as a result of sleep, laziness, and carelessness, is in the mode of ignorance. (18.39) There is no being, either on the earth or among the celestial controllers in the heaven, who can remain free from these three modes of material Nature. (18.40)

Division of labor is based on one's ability

The division of labor into four categories is also based on the qualities inherent in people's nature and not necessarily as one's birth right, O Arjuna. (18.41) Intellectuals who have serenity, self-control, austerity, purity, patience, honesty, spiritual knowledge, spiritual experience, and belief in God are labeled as intellectuals (Brahmans). (18.42) Those having the qualities of heroism, vigor, firmness, dexterity, steadfastness in battle, charity, and administrative skills are called Kshatriyas or warriors. (18.43) Those who

are good at cultivation, cattle rearing, business, trade, and industry are known as Vaishyas (merchants). Those who are very good in service and labor type work are classed as laborers. (18.44)

Attain salvation by duty, discipline, devotion

One can attain the highest perfection by devotion to one's natural work. Listen to Me how one attains perfection while engaged in one's natural work. (18.45) One attains perfection by worshipping the Supreme Being—from whom all beings originate, and by whom all this universe is pervaded — through performance of one's natural duty for Him. (18.46) One's inferior natural work is better than superior unnatural work even though well performed. One who does the work ordained by one's inherent nature without selfish motives incurs no sin or Karmic bondage. (18.47) One's natural work, even though defective, should not be abandoned because all undertakings are enveloped by defects as fire is covered by smoke, O Arjuna. (18.48) The person whose mind is always free from attachment, who has subdued the mind and senses, and who is free from desires, attains the supreme perfection of freedom from the bondage of Karma by renouncing attachment to the fruits of work. (18.49)

Learn from Me briefly, O Arjuna, how one who has attained such perfection — the freedom from the bondage of Karma — attains the Supreme Person, the goal of spiritual knowledge. (18.50) Endowed with purified intellect, subduing the mind with firm resolve, turning away from sound and other objects of the senses, giving up likes and dislikes; living in solitude; eating lightly; controlling the mind, speech, and organs of action; ever absorbed in yoga of meditation; taking refuge in detachment; and relinquishing egotism, violence, pride, lust, anger, and proprietorship — one becomes peaceful, free from the notion of "I" and "my", and fit for attaining oneness with the Supreme Being. (18.51-53) Absorbed in the Supreme Being, the serene one neither grieves nor desires. Becoming impartial to all beings, one obtains My Para-Bhakti, the highest devotional love. (18.54) By devotion one truly understands what and who I am in essence. Having known Me in essence, one immediately merges with Me. (18.55)

A Karma-yogi attains the eternal immutable abode, by My grace — even while doing all duties — just by dedicating all action to Me with loving devotion. (18.56) Sincerely offer all actions to Me, set Me as your supreme goal, and completely depend on Me. Always fix your mind on Me and resort to Karma-yoga. (18.57) When your mind becomes fixed on Me, you shall overcome all difficulties by My grace. But, if you do not listen to Me due to ego, you shall perish. (18.58)

Karmic bondage and the free will

If due to ego you think: I shall not fight, your resolve is vain. Because your own nature will compel you to fight. (18.59) O Arjuna, you are controlled by your own nature-born Karmic impressions (or Samskara). Therefore, you shall do — even against your will — what you do not wish to do out of delusion. (18.60) The Supreme Lord, Krishna or God, abiding as the controller in the inner psyche of all beings, O Arjuna, causes them to evolve — or work out their Karma — like a puppet of Karma, mounted on a machine. (18.61)

The Supreme Controller is the reflection of the Supreme Spirit in the body. The Supreme Lord organizes, controls, supervises, and directs everything in the universe. Human being is like a puppet of Karma mounted on a body which is the vehicle of transmigration. The word evolve refers to working out one's Karma. Thus we become the puppet of our own Karma created by our free will.

The Lord has made Karmic laws as the controller of all living beings. Therefore, one must learn to gladly endure all that fate imposes by taking refuge in God and following His commandments. Vedas declare that the Lord, using His law of Karma, makes us dance as a juggler would make his monkey dance. Without the laws of Karma; the scriptural injunctions, prohibitions, as well as self-effort, would have no value at all. Karma is the eternal justice and the eternal law. As a result of the working of eternal justice, there can be no escape from the consequences of our deeds. We become the product of our own past thinking and action. Therefore, we must think and act wisely at the present moment, using the scriptures as a guide.

The doctrine of Karma and reincarnation is also found in the following two verses of the Koran: Allah is He who created you and then sustained you, then causes you to die, then gives life to you again (Surah 30.40). He may reward those who believe and do good works. No one is able to escape His law of consequences (Surah 30.45). People cannot escape from the consequences of their deeds, for as we sow, so we reap. Cause and effect cannot be separated because the effect exists in the cause as the fruit exists in the seed. Good and evil deeds follow us continually like our shadows.

The Bible also says: Whosoever shedeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed (Genesis 9.06). It is believed that all references to Karma and reincarnation were taken out of the Bible during the second century with the noble aim of encouraging people to strive hard for perfection during this very life. Those who believe in reincarnation must avoid laziness and procrastination, stress intense spiritual discipline, and try their best to get Self-

realization in this very life as if there were no reincarnation. Live as though this is your last day on this earth. One cannot achieve anything through laziness and procrastination.

Seek refuge in the Supreme Lord alone with loving devotion, O Arjuna. By His grace you shall attain supreme peace and the Eternal Abode. (18.62) Thus, I have explained the knowledge that is more secret than the secret. After fully reflecting on this, do as you wish. (18.63)

Path of surrender is the ultimate path to God

Hear once again My most secret, supreme word. You are very dear to Me; therefore, I shall tell this for your benefit. (18.64) Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, offer service to Me, bow down to Me, and you shall certainly reach Me. I promise you, because you are My very dear friend. (18.65) Setting aside doership, ownership and attachment to the fruits of all works, just surrender to— or gladly abide by— My Will. I shall liberate you from all sins or bondage of Karma. Do not grieve. (18.66)

The meaning of abandoning all duties and taking refuge in God is that one should perform duty without ego and attachment to results; as an offering to the Lord, and totally depend only on Him. The Lord takes full responsibility for a person who totally depends on Him and understands: <u>All is manifestation of the One</u>.

The highest service to God, and the best charity

This knowledge should never be spoken by you to one who is devoid of austerity, who is without devotion, who does not desire to listen, or who speaks ill of Me. (18.67)

To speak of wisdom to a deluded person, to glorify sacrifice to a greedy person, to advise sense control to an irascible person, and to discourse on Lord Rama's exploits to a lecher, is as useless as sowing seed on barren ground. It is not for any soul to believe, save by the permission of Allah. You should not compel one to believe (Surah 10.100-101). Anyone to whom Allah has not granted the light (of knowledge) will have no light (Surah 24.40). The study of Gita or any other scripture is meant only for sincere persons. According to Ramakrishna, one can understand Him as much as He makes one understand. Guru Nanak said: O Beloved; only they to whom You give the divine knowledge, obtain it.

The one who shall propagate (or help the propagation of) this supreme secret philosophy of the Gita amongst devotees, shall be performing the highest devotional service to Me and shall certainly come to Me. (18.68) No other person shall do a more pleasing service to Me, and no one on the earth shall be dearer to Me. (18.69)

The Grace of the Gita

Those who shall study our sacred dialogue shall be performing a holy act of knowledge-sacrifice. This is My promise. (18.70) Whoever hears or reads this sacred dialogue in the form of the Gita with

faith and without cavil becomes free from sin, and attains heaven — the higher worlds of those whose actions are pure and virtuous. (18.71) O Arjuna, did you listen to this with single-minded attention? Has your delusion born of ignorance been completely destroyed? (18.72) Arjuna said: By Your Grace my delusion is destroyed; I have gained Self-knowledge; my confusion with regard to body and Spirit is dispelled; and I shall obey Your command. (18.73)

Sanjaya said: Thus, I heard this wonderful dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna, causing my hair to stand on end. (18.74) By the grace of guru sage Vyasa, I heard this most secret and supreme yoga directly from Krishna, the Lord of yoga, Himself speaking to Arjuna before my very eyes of clairvoyance granted by sage Vyasa. (18.75) O King, by repeated remembrance of this marvelous and sacred dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna, I am thrilled at every moment, and (18.76) recollecting again and again, O King, that marvelous form of Krishna I am greatly amazed, and I rejoice over and over again. (18.77)

Both spiritual knowledge and action are needed

Wherever there will be both Krishna, the Lord of yoga (or Dharma in the form of the scriptures) and Arjuna with the weapons of duty and protection, there will be everlasting prosperity, victory, happiness, and morality. This is my conviction. (18.78)

Thus ends the Bhagavad-Gita

This book is offered to the Lord of the Universe
May He bless us all with Goodness,
Prosperity, and Peace.

Glossary of Sanskrit words:
https://www.gita-society.com/glossary.pdf

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